

**Diet Advice to Manage a
Partial Bowel Obstruction**

A partial bowel blockage can occur if an area of the bowel is narrowed due to:

- hardening of the bowel wall
- cancer within the bowel area
- outside pressure on the bowel
- swelling/inflammation of the bowel

When this happens, digested food cannot easily pass through the narrowed area of the bowel. This may cause symptoms such as nausea/vomiting, heartburn, stomach fullness/bloating, abdominal cramps/pain, or change in bowel habits. Some of these symptoms can last for a short time or be an ongoing concern.

This handout provides helpful tips and food ideas which may provide some relief to these symptoms when part of your bowel is blocked or at risk of becoming blocked.

Type of diet needed

Your doctor or health care provider may recommend a low fibre or liquid diet based on your symptoms and your dietitian can help you to make appropriate food choices. This table describes common symptoms and suggests the best diet to follow to help provide some relief to your symptoms.

Levels	Symptoms	Diet to follow
Level 1	Increased gas, bloating, stomach cramps, mild pain	Low Fibre diet (see page 3)
Level 2 Constant daily symptoms	Feel full quickly with meals, heartburn, persistent stomach pain and cramps, bloating with nausea	Liquid diet (see page 9) If you have been on a liquid diet for more than 5 days, contact your dietitian for supplementation.
Level 3 Acute or severe symptoms	Severe stomach pain requiring pain medication Nausea and vomiting Weakness	Call your doctor or go to your local emergency department.

General Advice

- **How to eat through the day**
 - Eat or drink small amounts every 2 hours. Large meals can cause more discomfort. Try to have 6-7 small meals or snacks spread out through the day.
 - Cut foods into small pieces.
 - Chew foods well and eat slowly.
- **What to eat through the day**
 - Follow a Low Fibre Diet or a Liquid Diet.
 - Avoid any food that is tough or stringy (celery, tough meats).
 - Well-cooked vegetables, fruit and meat may be tolerated better. Use moist cooking methods (simmer, poach, stew, roast) versus dry cooking methods (grill, broil, barbecue). Sometimes pureed foods may be easier to digest.
- **Aim to consume at least 6 cups of liquid through the day**
 - Sip liquids throughout the day instead of drinking large amounts at one time.
 - Do your best to drink as much as you can between your meals and snacks (juices, broths and water).
 - If you are losing weight, choose higher calorie liquids such as milk, yogurt drinks, cream soups or milkshakes.
- **Take a multivitamin and mineral supplement** if your diet is very limited. Ask your dietitian or local pharmacy about the best one for you.
- Try to **take a short walk every day** to help your bowels move.
- Take **bowel medications** as advised by your doctor to promote regular and easy to pass bowel movements (see page 8).
- Keep a **food and symptom journal** of the time what you ate and how you felt to help identify patterns of eating or foods that do not agree with you. Take note of the time of day, what you ate and how you felt.
- **Experiment with foods** and add them into your diet one food at a time and in small amounts. Avoid any foods that make you feel worse.
- **If your symptoms become worse**, try drinking only liquids for a few hours to help settle your stomach. When you feel more comfortable, re-introduce low fiber foods back into your diet in small amounts.
- **If these diet suggestions are not helpful**, follow up with your doctor or dietitian for guidance.

Low Fibre Diet Information

Follow a **Low Fibre Diet** to help reduce abdominal cramping, bloating and diarrhea.

- **Avoid foods with more than 2 grams of fibre per serving.**

Read labels for fibre content on pre-packaged and prepared foods and take note of the serving size.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 Slice	
Servings per Container 22	
Amount per serving	
Calories 50 Calories from Fat 10	
% Daily Value *	
Total Fat 1g	1%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 115mg	5%
Total Carbohydrate 10g	3%
Dietary Fiber 5g	20%
Sugars 1g	

Use this table:

Note: If there are foods in the “you may choose” column that do not agree with you, then you should avoid them.

Hot Cereals	
Avoid	You may choose
Red River® Sunny Boy®	Oatmeal, ½ cup cooked Cream of Wheat®, 1 cup cooked
Cold Cereals	
Avoid	You may choose
Cereals with more than 2 grams fibre/serving Examples: All Bran®, Bran Buds®, Bran Flakes® Fiber1®, granola	Cereals with less than 2 grams fibre/serving Examples: Cornflakes®, Rice Krispies®, Special K®

Breads and Baked Goods	
Avoid	You may choose
<p>Breads and baked goods with more than 2 grams of fibre per serving</p> <p>Breads labeled as a high or very high source of fibre</p> <p>Any product made with 100% whole wheat flour (bread, bagel, pita, tortilla)</p> <p>Baked goods made with nuts and seeds</p> <p>Bran muffins</p> <p>Sprouted whole grain bread</p> <p>Dark rye bread*</p> <p>Naan or roti bread*</p> <p>Pumpernickel bread *</p> <p>*means it may cause gas for some people</p>	<p>Breads and baked goods with less than 2 grams of fibre per serving.</p> <p>In general, those made with white flour are well-tolerated</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>Bread made with white rice flour</p> <p>Hamburger/hotdog buns</p> <p>Spelt bread, sourdough, panini</p> <p>White bread, muffins, bagels, pita</p> <p>60% Whole wheat bread</p> <p>Light rye bread</p> <p>White English muffins</p> <p>White flour tortillas</p> <p>White pancakes and waffles</p>
Pastas and Noodles	
Note: Have 1 cup or less of cooked pasta or noodles per meal	
Avoid	You may choose
<p>Pastas with made with whole wheat flour</p> <p>Smart® pastas with added fibre</p>	<p>Pastas made with white flour.</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>Egg noodles, macaroni, rice noodles, spaghetti , fettuccini</p>
Grains	
Avoid	You may choose
<p>Barley</p> <p>Brown rice</p> <p>Bulgur, buckwheat</p> <p>Corn meal or polenta</p> <p>Natural bran, wheat germ</p> <p>Popcorn</p> <p>Quinoa</p> <p>Wild rice</p> <p>Graham wafers, digestive biscuits, kasha, stoned wheat thins</p> <p>Couscous *</p> <p>*means it may cause gas for some people</p>	<p>Rice, corn or quinoa cakes</p> <p>Soda or Ritz ®crackers</p> <p>White rice</p> <p>Pretzels and pretzel crackers</p> <p>Social tea biscuits, melba toast</p>

This information is not meant to replace the medical counsel of your doctor or individual consultation with a registered dietitian. This information may only be used in its entirety. Authorization given to reproduce this information with acknowledgement to Oncology Nutrition, BC Cancer Agency

Nuts and Seeds	
Avoid	You may choose
<p>All whole and ground nuts, such as almonds, hazelnuts, soy nuts, etc.</p> <p>All whole and ground seeds, such as chia, flax, sesame, sunflower, etc. Coconut</p> <p>Products containing nuts and seeds, such as trail mix, granola and granola bars</p>	<p>Smooth nut butters (peanut, almond , cashew) Note: Have only 1 tablespoon of nut butter at a time Tahini</p>
Beans and Lentils	
Avoid	You may choose
<p>All legumes *</p> <p>Examples: Beans (kidney, black, navy, lima, soy) Peas (chick peas, split peas, black-eyed) Lentils Edamame beans *means it may cause gas for some people</p>	<p>None</p>
Fruit	
<p>Note: Remove all skins, membranes and seeds from your fruit. Cooked or canned fruit is usually tolerated better.</p>	
Avoid	You may choose
<p>All dried fruit, such as dates, prunes, raisins, figs, and dried apricots.</p> <p>Fresh, frozen or dried blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, and cranberries Other fresh fruit that should be avoided include:</p> <p>Avocado Grapes Papaya Pomegranate Orange Rhubarb</p> <p>Apple with skin* Cherries * Persimmon*</p>	<p>Start with 1 serving per day; Limit to 2 servings per day (1/2 cup portions) Applesauce Bananas Cantaloupe or Honeydew Melon Kiwi Pineapple Plum Strawberries Watermelon</p> <p>Apple, no skin * Apricot, * Grapefruit without membrane* Mango* Nectarine* Peach * *means it may cause gas for some people</p>

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Vegetables

Note: Remove skins, seeds, woody stems and cook well

Avoid	You may choose
Broccoli Brussels sprouts Celery Corn Parsnips Potato, with skin Spinach, cooked Sweet potato / Yam Swiss chard Artichoke hearts * Green Peas* Snap Peas * Snow Peas* Kale	<p>Start with 1 serving per day; Limit to 2 servings per day (1/2 cup portions)</p> Alfalfa sprouts Basil Bean sprouts Bell peppers, membranes and seeds removed Bok Choy Canned bamboo shoots Carrots, peeled Cucumber, peeled and seeds removed Eggplant, no skin Green beans Kohlrabi Potato, no skin Radish Parsley Pumpkin, peeled Lettuce (leaf, romaine, iceberg) Spinach, raw, stems removed Squash, peeled Tomatoes, no skin or seeds Turnip, peeled Water chestnuts Zucchini, peeled Asparagus* Beets, peeled* Cabbage* Cauliflower * Garlic* Leek* Mushrooms * Onions* *means it may cause gas for some people

Meat Products and Alternatives	
Note: Tender cuts or ground meat may be tolerated better.	
Avoid	You may choose
Tough meats with gristle, tough skin, fish skin and bones	All other meats including: Beef Pork Chicken Turkey Fish Seafood Meat alternatives such as soft-soy-based products, tofu Eggs
Dairy Products	
Note: Dairy products are low in fibre.	
Avoid	You may choose
Milkshakes or smoothies made with berries or other high fibre fruit/vegetables Yogurt with berries or granola	Milk Yogurt Cheese Ice cream Non-dairy alternative such as soy milk
Beverages	
Avoid	You may drink
Juices containing whole berries or extra pulp Nutritional supplements that have added fibre	Almond milk, rice milk, hemp milk, cashew beverage, coconut beverage Fruit juices that have pulp and seeds removed Vegetable juices with pulp removed, such as tomato and carrot based juices Nutritional supplements, such as Ensure® and Boost® Gatorade®, Powerade®, Sportade® Diluted Gingerale®, Sprite®, 7Up® Herbal tea Regular or decaffeinated coffee and tea Ovaltine®

Is a low fibre diet nutritious?

You may feel that a low fiber diet is not as nutritious as it limits certain fruits and vegetables and whole grains.

The following tips provide important vitamins and minerals that may be missing on a low fibre diet:

- Enjoy fruit and vegetable juices (without pulp).
- Try making smoothies with yogurt and fruit juice concentrate or low fibre fruit and vegetable choices.
- Include pureed vegetable soups as they are nutritious and low in fibre because they are diluted with broth.
- Make a stir-fry with poultry, seafood or meat and low fibre vegetables such as zucchini and bell peppers. Serve over white pasta or rice.
- Use sourdough or other crusty breads to increase heartiness.
- Consider taking a daily multivitamin/mineral supplement.

Bowel medications

You may notice your bowel movements are smaller and occur less often. To prevent constipation, you will need to take medications/laxatives to have regular bowel movements that are easy to pass.

Consult with your doctor before taking any bowel medications or changing your diet to deal with your symptoms.

You may need to adjust the type or amount of medication that works best for you. Speak with your doctor or a pharmacist for help with your medications.

Do not take any product that will increase stool size such as bulk forming agents that contain psyllium (e.g. Metamucil).

Liquid Diet Information

General Advice

- Sip liquids throughout the day in small amounts.
- Alternate between sweet and savoury flavors for variety.
- Sip slowly and ‘chew’ your fluids. Jell-O®, popsicles and hard candies can also provide mouthfeel (the physical sensation that increases enjoyment of food).
- Make your own juices for added variety.
- Read labels - choose those with 100% juice where possible.
- In some cases, your doctor or dietitian may suggest you drink only clear liquids for a short time. Clear liquids are those that you can see through. Note that they have little or no protein. If you are drinking only clear liquids for more than five days, ask your dietitian how to supplement your diet.

Liquid Choices

Full liquids	Clear Liquids
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dairy beverages like cow’s milk, kefir, buttermilk, goat’s milk, eggnog etc. • Dairy alternatives like soy beverages, almond, rice or coconut beverages • Lactose free milk (Lactaid) • Sherbet, sorbet, ice-cream • Yogurt with no fruit added • Nutritional supplement drinks (Ensure®, Boost ® or any generic brand) • Cream of Wheat or Rice • Strained cream soups • Tomato juice • Fruit nectars • Hot chocolate, lattes, chai tea, steamed milk, milkshakes • Pudding, custard, crème brulee, mousse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All clear fruit juices • Homemade juices with pulp removed • Frozen fruit juice concentrate • Boost Fruit Beverage • Jell-O® • Popsicles • Homemade bone broth • Canned or powdered soup stock • Coffee • Tea (Rooibos, herbal, green etc.) • Hard candies, gummy bears • Iced Tea, Ginger Ale®, Gatorade®, Sportade®, Powerade, Lemonade, Kool-Aid®* • Water, coconut water, Vitamin water

Is a liquid diet nutritious?

A liquid diet can provide enough calories and protein to meet your needs and help maintain your weight depending on the liquids that you choose. Choose a variety of liquids as tolerated. You may need to take a daily multivitamin and mineral supplement.

Juicing on a Liquid Diet

Try these suggestions to make your own home-made juices:

- Use a **juicer that removes pulp** from the fruit and vegetables.
- Add more fruit for a sweeter tasting juice.
- Add more vegetables for a savoury tasting juice with less sugar content
- Start with smaller amounts of leafy greens as they can add a bitter taste.
- Store juices in the fridge and drink within two days.

Steps	Food source	Your choice
Start with a base liquid	Clear juice, water, ice, juice from cucumber and watermelon, coconut water	
Add fruit and vegetable	Carrots, beets, tomatoes	
Peel and cut in wedges; Add one at a time	Green grapes, peaches, pears, oranges, apples, cherries	
Add greens	Spinach, kale, collard greens, parley, hearts of romaine	
Add flavour	Lemon juice Peeled fresh ginger	

What if I don't have a juicer?

Coarsely chop all ingredients. Place in blender one at a time, with the juiciest ingredients at the base (cucumber, watermelon). Blenderize.

Stack four layers of cheesecloth in a large bowl. Pour the juice into the bowl. Gather the edges of the cloth, twist and squeeze to extract the juice. Throw away the pulp.

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