

Radiotherapy department

Dietary advice: reducing diarrhoea during radiotherapy

Diarrhoea is the word used to describe very thin, watery poo, usually associated with a very frequent bowel habit.

A good fluid intake is very important to prevent you becoming dehydrated if you have diarrhoea. Aim for at least 10–12 drinks per day. It is worth being aware that tea, coffee (and other caffeine-based drinks) may stimulate the movement of the bowel and increase problems with diarrhoea.

Unfortunately finding out which foods may affect a person can be 'hit and miss' at times and very much a process of elimination. People will not always experience the same problems. Please use the food and symptom diary overleaf to try to identify foods which may affect you.

Tips to reduce diarrhoea

- Identify the potential causes of diarrhoea in **your diet** and try to reduce them.
- Replace wholewheat or oat-based cereals with Rice Krispies, Cornflakes or Special K.
- Replace wholewheat biscuits with biscuits made from white flour such as Rich Tea, Marie biscuits or custard creams.
- Avoid nuts and pulses (baked beans, kidney beans, peas and lentils).
- Take only small amounts of fruit and vegetables and avoid eating the skin.
- Some people find it helpful to cut down on fat by avoiding fried foods, pastries, cream cakes and fatty meat.

If you have followed a lower fibre diet and are still having problems with diarrhoea please speak to a member of your treating team as medications may be helpful.

There is further information about coping with bowel problems in the booklet about radiotherapy for your specific cancer and 'Eating – help yourself'.

The Christie Hotline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and can provide help and support at every stage of treatment. All patients having radiotherapy can contact the Hotline for support and advice for radiotherapy reactions. Call **0161 446 3658**.



