

Department of Nutrition and Dietetics

Low fibre diet for irritable bowel syndrome

Fibre is that part of plant foods that our digestive system is unable to break down. It is found in cereals, fruits and vegetables and any foods containing them.

Some people find that too much fibre in their diet can aggravate symptoms of diarrhoea, constipation, bloating, flatulence and abdominal pain. Following a low fibre diet may help to decrease these symptoms.

The following list of foods will help you to make low fibre choices in your diet. You will likely only need to follow a low fibre diet for a temporary period. Try following a low fibre diet for an initial period of four weeks.

You may then find that you can gradually reintroduce some of the higher fibre foods back into your diet to a level that you can tolerate. Guidance on how to reintroduce fibre is given at the end of this diet sheet.

If you experience constipation while following a low fibre diet, you may need to take a non fermentable fibre supplement. Suitable types are normacol, celevac and linseeds. These should be taken with plenty of fluid. Your doctor or a dietitian can advise you about these.

It is important that you have an adequate fluid intake while following a low fibre diet. You should aim to have at least 8 to 10 cups of fluid daily.

Low fibre (suitable)**High fibre (unsuitable)****Meat and Fish**

All types

Meat or fish made with with wholemeal pastry or breadcrumbs

Dairy Products

Milk - all types

Cheese - all types without pieces of fruit or nuts

Cheese with large pieces of fruit or nuts

Yoghurts - natural or fruit flavoured

Yoghurts with added fibre

Cream

Yoghurts with large pieces of fruit, cereal or nuts

Eggs

Fromage frais

Fats and Oils

All types

Cereals and Baked Products

White flour and baked products made with white flour such as white bread and toast, crumpets, pastry, chappati, poppadums,

Wholemeal, brown, granary, bran and soya flours and breads
Foods made with these flours.
High fibre white breads

White pasta*, spaghetti*, macaroni*, noodles*

Wholemeal pasta
Cold pasta

White rice*, Couscous, tapioca, sago, cornflour

Brown rice
Cold rice

Rice crispies, Corn flakes, Special K, Sugar Puffs, chocolate/sugar coated cereals

Wholegrain breakfast cereals e.g. Weetabix, All-Bran, porridge, muesli and any cereal with added nuts or fruit

Plain biscuits, e.g. Rich Tea, Morning Coffee, Marie, chocolate chip, chocolate, custard creams, malted milk

Wholemeal biscuits e.g. Digestives, flapjacks, hob nobs
Biscuits containing nuts or dried fruit, e.g. Fig rolls, Garibaldi,

Plain cake e.g. Victoria sponge, Madeira

Cakes with added fruits or nuts

Plain crispbreads and crackers

Rye and whole grain crispbreads or crackers
Oatcakes

***Rice, pasta and potato should be eaten whilst still hot. When cooled, these foods become more resistant to digestion, effectively increasing their fibre content.**

Fruit

Where possible, avoid skins and seeds. Keep to a maximum of two portions a day. Try to spread fruit throughout the day.

Low fibre (suitable)

Apples
 Apricot
 Cherries
 Fruit Cocktail
 Grapefruit
 Grapes
 Kiwi
 Lychees
 Mango
 Melon
 Nectarine
 Oranges
 Peaches
 Pears
 Pineapple
 Plums
 Rhubarb
 Satsumas
 Strawberries
 Tangerines

High fibre (unsuitable)

Dried fruit
 Bananas
 Banana chips
 Blackberries
 Cranberries
 Currants
 Dates
 Figs
 Gooseberries
 Loganberries
 Prunes
 Raisins
 Raspberries
 Redcurrants
 Sultanas
 Coconut

Vegetables and Potatoes

Where possible, avoid skins, seeds and stalks. Keep to a maximum of 2 portions a day, in addition to potato. Try to spread your vegetables throughout the day.

Low fibre (suitable)

Asparagus
 Aubergine
 Beetroot
 Carrot
 Celery
 Courgette
 Cucumber
 Leeks
 Lettuce
 Marrow
 Mushroom
 Onion
 Pepper
 Potato*
 Radish
 Swede
 Tomato

Medium fibre (have small portions occasionally)

Avocado
 Beansprouts
 Green/French/Runner beans
 Broccoli florets
 Cabbage
 Cauliflower florets
 Mange-tout
 Parsnips
 Spinach
 Spring greens
 Sweet potato*

High fibre (unsuitable)

Pulse-type beans, such as baked, broad, butter, kidney
 Brussels sprouts
 Chick peas
 Lentils
 Peas
 Sweetcorn

Please note that you can choose to eat more fruits than vegetables or vice versa, providing that your total intake does not exceed four portions.

Miscellaneous**Low fibre (suitable)****High fibre (unsuitable)****Puddings**

Ice cream, lollies, sorbets, jelly, milk puddings, rice pudding, custard, blancmange

Any puddings containing fruits or nuts
Crumbles and other puddings made with high fibre biscuits or flours

Drinks

Water, Squashes, Fruit juices
Tea, Coffee
Cocoa, Ovaltine
Fizzy drinks (please note these are low in fibre but they may increase wind and bloating)
Fruit and vegetable smoothies made with fruits and vegetables from the low fibre list and within the daily allowance.

Fruit juice with bits
Fruit and vegetable smoothies or milk made with fruits and vegetables from the high fibre list

Miscellaneous

Honey, syrup, lemon curd
Smooth jam, marmalade without pips/seeds

Marmalade or jam with bits/ peel
Peanut butter

Marmite, Bovril

Nuts, seeds
Tropical and Bombay mix

Corn, maize and rice based snacks e.g. prawn crackers, rice cakes, cheese puffs, rice crispie cakes, cornflake cakes
Pretzels

Potato crisps*
Wholemeal/ wholegrain savoury snacks
Cereal bars made with oats, dried fruit or nuts

Boiled sweets, chocolate, toffee

Confectionery containing fruit and nuts

Seasoning, spices

Pickles and chutneys

Soups, stock cubes

Lentil, pea and bean soups

***Rice, pasta and potato should be eaten whilst still hot. When cooled, these foods become more resistant to digestion, effectively increasing their fibre content.**

Example meal plan on a low fibre diet

Breakfast	Fruit juice (without bits) Cornflakes or Rice Crispies with milk White bread with margarine or butter Shredless marmalade or jam
Mid-morning	Tea, coffee or squash Plain biscuit
Lunch	Sandwiches made with white bread or crackers or plain crispbread Yoghurt One portion of fruit (from low fibre list)
Mid-afternoon	Plain scone or plain biscuit Tea, coffee or squash
Evening Meal	Meat or fish or chicken or eggs One – two portions of low fibre vegetables Potatoes or pasta or white rice Milk pudding, jelly or cheese and biscuits One portion of fruit (from low fibre list) Squash
Supper	Milky drink Plain biscuit

Reintroduction of higher fibre foods

If, after a four week trial of the low fibre diet your symptoms are improved, try introducing higher fibre foods gradually back in to your diet. Introduce only one type of fibre each week using the list below as a guide. This will enable you to determine the types and amounts of fibre that you can tolerate before provoking symptoms again.

Week 1

Try eating oats such as porridge, flapjacks

Week 2

Try eating the skins on potatoes and on the low fibre types of fruit and vegetables, for example, apples, pears.

Week 3

Try having an extra piece of fruit or an extra portion of vegetables from the low or medium fibre list.

Five portions per day of fruits and vegetables (not including potatoes) are recommended for a healthy diet. (NB: One glass of fruit juice counts as one portion of fruit).

Week 4

Try replacing white bread with wholemeal or granary bread.

Week 5

Try a higher fibre breakfast cereal, for example, Weetabix, Shredded Wheat, Bran Flakes.

Week 6

Try reintroducing fruits and vegetables from the high fibre lists such as bananas, dried fruit, peas, sweetcorn

Please remember that these reintroductions give a gradual build-up of fibre in your diet. The aim is to identify a level of fibre that you can take comfortably.

For example, you may find that you can eat high fibre vegetables on days when you do not have wholemeal bread and high fibre breakfast cereals or vice versa.

If this is the case, try varying the sources of your fibre intake on a daily basis to achieve a varied diet.

Vitamin and mineral supplements

If you are unable to reintroduce any of the high fibre foods back in to your diet, you may need to take a multi-vitamin supplement to ensure you meet your requirements. Please discuss this with your doctor or ask for a referral to a local dietitian who can assess the nutritional adequacy of your diet.



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Portuguese

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Cantonese

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Turkish

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