



Nutrition Tips

Diabetes and your digestion

Tips to feel better:

1. Try not to eat during dialysis since it drops your blood pressure, slows down your digestion and makes you feel bad.
2. If you have low blood sugar during dialysis, ask the nurse to give you IV dextrose, it's the best way to treat low blood sugar.
3. If constipated, try to use stool softeners like ducosate, instead of bulking agents, like Metamucil, which are harder to digest.
4. If you can, stay away from pain medicines, they can slow your digestion even more.
5. There are medicines that can help some people. Ask your doctor about Reglan, antibiotics, anti-nausea medicines or probiotics.
6. If prescribed medicine, take it as directed, every day if needed, and not just the days you have the worst symptoms.
7. Ask for the brochures on diarrhea or constipation for more ideas.

The average dialysis patient has stomach trouble, nausea or vomiting at least once a week from side effects of kidney disease. People that also have diabetes have trouble with their digestion even more often. Sometimes this can get out of hand.

You should get concerned when:

- You loose more than 5% of your weight in 3 months or less.
- You can't keep food and liquid down regularly.
- Your fluid gains between treatments are small, less than 1 kg.
- It is hard to control your blood sugars because you vomit undigested food.
- You are often bothered with uncontrolled diarrhea, especially at night.

Fiber

Some kinds of fiber may help with diarrhea, while others may not digest well.

Soluble fiber like oatmeal, barley, beans, brown rice, and whole grains will slow digestion in your stomach, but help with blood sugar control.

Insoluble fiber like whole wheat, bran, seeds, nuts, raw vegetables, fresh fruit helps with diarrhea by bulking stools, but is harder for your stomach to digest. Depending on your situation, your needs will change, talk with your dietitian about solutions.



Circle what you can try to help improve your digestion:

- Small, frequent meals: try 6 small meals and snacks a day.
- Some people can tolerate liquids better than solids. Check with your dietitian so your fluid gains are OK.
- Improving blood sugar control will help you decrease symptoms.
- Chew your food well, this will help food leave your stomach faster.
- If you are having bad symptoms, try pureed foods and ground meats.
- Fat does not usually need to be limited, but it may help some people to avoid it.
- Sit up for at least 1-2 hours after eating. Do not eat reclining.
- Try ginger tea, ginger ale or ginger candies for nausea.
- Avoid smoking, alcohol and caffeine, since they distort digestion of food.
- Limit insoluble fiber for stomach problems, but eat more for diarrhea.
- Try avoiding milk and see if it helps lessen diarrhea. Try eating yogurt with active cultures.

Talk with your dietitian about changing your diet to help improve your symptoms. If you aren't eating much, you might be able to eat more high potassium or phosphorus foods.

Bran Breakfast Bars

By Karin Boyer, DTR

1 cup oatmeal

1/2 cup whole wheat flour

1/3 cup chopped raisins or 8 medium dates, dices

1/3 cup corn or safflower oil

1-1/2 cup raw bran

6 tablespoons sugar or 3 tablespoons sugar substitute

1-1/2 cups boiling water

Nutrition info: Makes 24 squares, serving is 2 squares: 122 calories, 2 gms protein, 142 mg potassium, 5mg sodium

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Pour 1 cup boiling water over diced fruit. Allow to stand about 20 minutes. Combine dry ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Drain fruit, discard juice. Add 1/2 cup boiling water to fruit and blend in blender or food processor with oil. Add to dry ingredients and mix well.



Put batter in in greased or nonstick 9x12 inch oblong pan. Press level with fingers or spatula. Mark cutting lines with knife, 4 squares the narrow way, 6 squares the long way. Bake 20 minutes, cool on rack. Refrigerate or freeze if keeping more than 2 days. Do not eat too many at once, they are laxative.