



Low-Residue/Fiber Diet for Colonoscopy

Your doctor has prescribed a low-residue diet. “Residue” is the word for parts of food (such as fiber) that pass undigested through the bowel. This is what forms stool. Low-residue foods are easily digested and absorbed. They leave the least residue, which results in less stool. This lets the intestine rest.

Reasons to Eat a Low-Residue/Fiber Diet

The goal of a low-residue diet is to limit the size and number of stools. It may be prescribed if you:

- Are having chemotherapy, radiation treatments or a colonoscopy
- Have had intestinal surgery
- Have a condition that affects the intestine, such as Crohn’s disease, ulcerative colitis or diverticulitis

General Guidelines for a Low-Residue/Fiber Diet

Your doctor may give you a list of things you can and can’t eat or drink. Read food labels and choose foods and drinks that have as close to zero grams as possible of fiber. Here are general guidelines:

Breads, pasta, cereal, rice, and other starches

What to choose:

- White bread, biscuits, muffins, and rolls; plain crackers; white pasta; white rice; cream of wheat; grits; white pancakes; cornflakes; cooked potatoes without skin.
- Fiber content of these foods should be less than 0.5 (half) gram per serving.

What to avoid:

- Whole-wheat or whole-grain breads, crackers, and pasta; breads with seeds or nuts; cornbread; wild or brown rice; whole-grain cereals, bran cereals, granola cereals, popcorn, cereals with seeds, nuts, coconut, or dried fruit; potatoes with skin

Milk and dairy

What to choose:

- Milk, smooth yogurt, ice cream, custard, cheese and cottage cheese

What to avoid:

- Ice cream and yogurt with seeds or nuts, or with chunks of fruit

Fruit

What to choose:

- Ripe banana; ripe nectarine, peach, apricot, papaya, plum; soft honeydew melon and cantaloupe; cooked or canned fruit without skin or seeds; applesauce; strained fruit juice (without pulp)

What to avoid:

- Raw or dried fruit; all berries; raisins; canned and raw pineapple; prunes and prune juice

Vegetables

What to choose:

- Well-cooked or canned vegetables without seeds, such as eggplant, green and wax beans, carrots, yellow squash, pumpkin, beets

What to avoid:

- Vegetables with seeds, such as unstrained tomato sauce; green peas; lima beans; broccoli; corn; parsnips, tomatoes

Meats and protein

What to choose:

- Tender, well-cooked meat, including ground meat, poultry, and fish; eggs; tofu; creamy peanut butter

What to avoid:

- Tough, chewy meat with gristle; peas, including split, yellow, black-eyed; beans, including navy, lima, black, garbanzo, soy, pinto, lentil; peanuts and crunchy peanut butter

Fats, oils, sauces, condiments

What to choose:

- Butter, margarine, oils, whipped cream, sour cream, mayonnaise, smooth dressings and sauces; plain gravy; smooth condiments

What to avoid:

- Dressing with seeds or fruit chunks; pickles and relishes

Other foods and drinks

What to choose:

- Plain gelatin; plain puddings; pretzels; plain cookies and cakes; honey, syrup, caffeinated drinks, including tea and coffee (ask your doctor first); soda

What to avoid:

- Popcorn; spicy foods; foods made with cocoa powder; alcohol (ask your doctor); marmalade, jam, preserves; desserts that have seeds, nuts, coconut, dried fruit, whole grains or bran; candy that has seeds or nuts