

## Patient Information

### Pelvic Floor Service Reducing Dietary Fibre

#### Introduction

This information leaflet is about how to reduce your dietary fibre intake as eating less fibrous foods can help to reduce chronic bowel symptoms including loose stools, urgency, difficulty with control, bloating and excessive wind. It is intended for patients under the care of the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Pelvic Floor Service. If you have a medical condition requiring you to follow a specific diet you should consult your health professional first. Please ask if you need further information.

Fibre is the part of plant food that is not completely broken down as it passes through the gut. It is found in cereal, fruit and vegetables and is important in keeping stools moving through the bowel and regulating bowel function. Bacteria in the colon try to break down the fibre by fermentation so more gasses are produced when there is more fibre present.

#### Why reduce dietary fibre?

Fibre is an important factor in maintaining a healthy bowel and regulating bowel function in the general population. However you may have found that fibre causes your stools to be frequent and loose along with bloating and excessive wind. Reducing your fibre intake therefore can help to reduce your bowel frequency and abdominal symptoms. We recommend a low fibre diet only after we have excluded other causes for your symptoms.

- Insoluble fibre cannot be dissolved in water. It is not broken down during digestion and forms the bulk of your stools. Foods high in insoluble fibre include wheat and bran, whole grains, nuts and the skins, seeds and pith of fruit and vegetables
- Soluble fibre forms a gel-like substance when mixed with water. It slows the digestion of food, softens stools and makes them easier to pass. Foods high in soluble fibre include oats, some vegetables including potatoes and beans, fruits especially citrus, nuts and seeds.

Foods that are naturally low in fibre are easily digested and leave a minimal amount of residue in the colon reducing stool frequency and reducing bloating and wind. Foods may contain both soluble and insoluble fibre but limiting foods that contain high levels of insoluble fibre may help to reduce your bowel symptoms. Please ask if you need further information.

## Useful tips

Trial and error will help you to identify any foods that may upset your bowels.

- Stress can make your bowels more active and looser so try to avoid chronic stress if you can. Include a variety of foods in your diet and chew your food well. Eat smaller meals at regular intervals to help your food to be digested.
- A food diary may be useful in identifying foods that aggravate your symptoms. Remember to record how you are eg rushed, stressed as well as what you eat.
- Limit yourself to no more than 2 portions of fruit and 2 portions of vegetables per day.
- Avoid rich or very spicy sauces and chilli if they worsen your symptoms.

## What if I get constipated?

It is important that you drink enough fluids while following a low fibre diet to avoid becoming constipated. You should aim to have at least 8 to 10 cups of fluid daily. If however you experience constipation a fibre supplement such as Normacol, Celevac or Linseed may be taken periodically along with plenty of fluids. Your health professional can advise you further.



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## Fibre content in foods

The following table provides a guide to low and high fibre foods and fluids that may affect your bowels. Try to eat a varied and balanced diet as you are able. If you have any questions or concerns please ask. We may refer you to a dietician if necessary.

Food type	Low fibre foods to include	High fibre foods to avoid
<b>Bread, cereals and nuts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White bread, English muffins, plain scones and bagels, pancakes, plain naan bread chapatti, poppadoms or pitta</li> <li>• White rice, pasta, noodles</li> <li>• Tortillas and tacos</li> <li>• Couscous, polenta</li> <li>• Cornflour, white flour, sago, tapioca, semolina</li> <li>• Refined breakfast cereals eg Rice Krispies, Special K and Cornflakes.</li> <li>• Plain sweet biscuits eg Rich Tea, shortbread</li> <li>• Sponge/plain cake</li> <li>• Plain crackers, rice cakes</li> <li>• Smooth peanut butter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wholemeal, granary, rye bread, white bread with added fibre, brown chapatti or brown pitta</li> <li>• All fruit/nut/seed breads, malt/currant/fruit loaves, fruit muffins or scones and pastries with fruit/dried fruit</li> <li>• Brown rice, pasta, whole wheat couscous, wholegrain noodles</li> <li>• Brown, wholemeal or granary flour, wheatgerm, pearl barley, quinoa, oatmeal</li> <li>• Wholegrain cereals eg. All Bran, Bran Flakes, Weetabix, muesli, porridge, Shredded Wheat</li> <li>• Rye crispbreads, wholemeal crackers, oatcakes</li> <li>• Wholemeal or fruit/nut biscuits, flapjacks, Digestives, fig rolls, fruit cake</li> <li>• All nuts and seeds, crunchy peanut butter</li> </ul>
<b>Fruit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fresh ripe, tinned or stewed fruit without skin, pith or pips</li> <li>• Fruit juices without pulp</li> <li>• Smooth coconut milk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All fruit with skins, stalks, seeds and stones</li> <li>• All dried fruit, dates, figs, prunes</li> <li>• Coconut</li> <li>• Green bananas</li> </ul>
<b>Vegetables and potatoes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well cooked vegetables with no skins, stalks or seeds</li> <li>• Strained vegetable juices</li> <li>• Smooth or sieved soups</li> <li>• Sieved tomato sauces eg passata and tomato puree</li> <li>• Boiled, mash, roast potatoes (no skin)</li> <li>• Vegetarians may have small portions of lentils, hummus or mushy peas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All raw or cooked vegetables including stalks, skins, seeds and peel</li> <li>• Cabbage, cassava, celery, curly kale, fennel, leeks, okra, peas, peppers, pumpkin, shallots, spinach, sprouts, sweetcorn, yam,</li> <li>• Soups with pieces eg minestrone</li> <li>• Jacket potato or wedges with skin</li> <li>• Pulses including baked beans, butter beans, kidney beans, chickpeas and lentils</li> </ul>



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Food type	Low fibre foods to include	High fibre foods to avoid
<b>Milk and dairy products</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk, cream, sour cream, crème fraiche, fromage frais</li> <li>• Cheese (any)</li> <li>• Smooth yoghurt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any milk products containing fruits, nuts, seeds or cereals</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruit and vegetable juices</li> <li>• Milk, milk-shakes</li> <li>• Still water soft drinks, squash</li> <li>• Decaffeinated tea, coffee or cola</li> <li>• Hot chocolate, Ovaltine, Horlicks, Bovril</li> <li>• Herbal tea, wheat tea and coffee</li> <li>• Tofu, Quorn</li> <li>• All fats and oils</li> <li>• Plain crisps, plain pretzels (no sesame seeds)</li> <li>• Plain cakes, puddings and pastries made with white flour</li> <li>• Jelly, ice-cream, milk puddings, custard, sorbet</li> <li>• Honey, sugar, syrup, jelly style preserves, marmalade with no peel,</li> <li>• Sweets and chocolate without dried fruit or nuts</li> <li>• Ketchup, sauces, dressings, gravy, marmite, bovril</li> <li>• Pepper, salt, herbs</li> <li>• Spices (in moderation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruit and vegetable juices with pulp</li> <li>• Prune juice</li> <li>• Caffeinated drinks eg espresso, Red Bull and cola</li> <li>• Smoothies</li> <li>• Ice-cream containing fruit and nuts</li> <li>• Popcorn, tortilla/corn chips</li> <li>• Twiglets, Bombay Mix</li> <li>• Flapjacks and muesli type snack bars</li> <li>• Seeds including pumpkin, sunflower or sesame</li> <li>• Cakes, biscuits, puddings or pies containing oats, nuts, coconut or fruit</li> <li>• Any jams, marmalade, sweet mincemeat</li> <li>• Sweets and chocolate with fruit, nuts, seeds or coconut</li> <li>• Wholegrain mustard, pickles, relish or chutney</li> <li>• Houmous, coleslaw</li> </ul>

## Contact details for further information

### Pelvic Floor Nurse Specialist

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital

Telephone: 01743 261083 (24hr answerphone)

### Further information is available from;

- **Patient Advise and Liaison Service (PALS)**

PALS will act on your behalf when handling patient and family concerns, they can also help you get support from other local or national agencies. PALS, is a confidential service.

**Royal Shrewsbury Hospital**, Tel: 0800 783 0057 or 01743 261691

**Princess Royal Hospital**, Tel: 01952 282888

- **The Pelvic Floor Society**

A national multi-professional body involved in supporting excellence in clinical practice, education and research, clinical standards, patient information and engagement in the commissioning of pelvic floor services.

Telephone: 020 7973 0307

Website: [www.thepelvicfloorsociety.co.uk](http://www.thepelvicfloorsociety.co.uk)

- **Bladder and Bowel Foundation**

For more information about bladder and bowel conditions, treatment and support

Telephone: 0870 770 3246

Website: [www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org](http://www.bladderandbowelfoundation.org)

- **The IBS network**

Information, advice and support to patients with IBS and working with health care professionals to facilitate IBS self management.

Telephone: 0114 272 3253

Website: [www.theibsnetwork.org](http://www.theibsnetwork.org)

- **NHS 111**

A fast and easy way to get the right help, whatever the time. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

Telephone: 111 (free from a landline or mobile)

Website: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

- **Patient UK**

Provides leaflets on health and disease translated into 11 other languages as well as links to national support/self help groups and a directory of UK health websites.

Website: [www.patient.info](http://www.patient.info)

- **Self-Help UK**

This is a directory of self-help groups and charities.

Website: [www.selfhelp.org.uk](http://www.selfhelp.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.sath.nhs.uk](http://www.sath.nhs.uk)

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