

What to eat when you have a partial bowel obstruction

This information will help you choose what to eat when you have a partial bowel obstruction. It has general nutrition guidelines only. Talk to your dietitian about the food choices that are right for you.

What diet do I need to follow?

Eating less fibre may help improve your pain, abdominal cramping or fullness and gas. The amount of fibre you can eat depends on your symptoms and the degree of your bowel obstruction. This chart shows symptoms and the type of diet that can help.

Type of symptoms	Type of diet that can help
Mild symptoms: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Occasional abdominal cramping, excess gas, bloating	Low fibre diet
Moderate symptoms: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Abdominal pain, cramps, bloating that does not go away	Minimal fibre diet
Severe symptoms: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Severe abdominal pain, heartburn, significant bloating, nausea, cramps	Fluid diet Contact your health care team.

Some helpful tips:

- You may find it helpful to keep a record of the foods that cause nausea, cramping or bloating and share this list with your dietitian.
- Eat only as much as you feel comfortable and do not force food!
- Chew all solid foods well.
- Eat small meals – large meals may lead to more discomfort and/or cramping. Aim for 5 or 6 small meals rather than 3 large meals.
- Drink as much as you can. Try to have 6 to 8 cups of fluids each day.
- You may need to take a multivitamin if you cannot eat as much as usual or if your diet is severely restricted. Discuss this with your doctor or dietitian.

Dietitian's suggestions:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Low fibre diet

Low fibre diet

- Avoid any foods that make your symptoms worse.
- Cook vegetables to help make them produce less gas when you eat them.
- As your symptoms improve, bring foods back into your diet one at a time and in small amounts. This will help you to identify any foods that you cannot tolerate.

	Foods to Eat	Foods To Avoid
Milk and Milk Products	Fluid milk and milk beverages Cheese such as cottage cheese, hard cheese, Cheese Whiz®, cheese slices, parmesan cheese Cream soups made with recommended ingredients Desserts such as Cool Whip®, puddings, yogurt, sherbet, ice cream	Cheese with seeds Yogurt mixed with fruits with seeds, tough skins or membranes (strawberry, raspberry, blueberry and cherry)
Meat, Fish, Poultry, and Meat Alternatives	Meats prepared by baking, broiling, roasting, poaching, and stewing: fish, poultry, lamb, beef, pork, veal, ham, rabbit, organ meats Shrimp, lobster, crab and other shell fish Eggs (all types) Tofu Well pureed hummus Hot dogs without a skin (most commercial brands) Smooth nut spreads such as smooth peanut butter	Nuts and seeds Beans and lentils Sausages and other processed meats such as bologna with casings or skins European frankfurters and other deli-made wieners Chunky nut spreads such as chunky peanut butter

	Foods to Eat	Foods To Avoid
Vegetables	<p>Well to soft cooked non-stringy vegetables: asparagus (young), beets and beet greens, broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, eggplant (skinless), potato (skinless, white or sweet), parsnips, pumpkin (seedless), rutabagas, squash, turnip, wax beans (canned green or yellow)</p> <p>Tomato paste, skinless and seedless tomato sauce</p> <p>Spaghetti sauce (plain or with ground beef)</p> <p>Vegetable juice (eg. V8® drink)</p> <p>Tomatoes and cucumbers (skinless and seedless)</p> <p>Bottled and roasted red peppers</p>	<p>Raw vegetables such as: bean sprouts, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, corn, coleslaw, cucumber, fiddleheads, lima beans, mushrooms, onions, okra, parsnips, peas, peppers, radish, sauerkraut, spinach, swiss chard, tomato, tossed salad</p> <p>Chinese vegetables such as bok choy, bamboo shoots</p>

Fruits	<p>Fruit juices/drinks, baked apple (peeled), applesauce, banana (ripe)</p> <p>Canned fruit such as: apricots, mandarin oranges, peaches, pears</p> <p>Eat these fruits if the skin, seeds and membranes are removed: apple, apricots, cantaloupe, grapefruit, honeydew melon, mango, nectarines, oranges, papayas, peaches, pears, plums, watermelon</p>	<p>Fruits with seeds, tough skins, or membranes: apple, apricots, blackberries, blueberries, cherries, cranberries, fruit cocktail, grapes, kiwi fruit, pineapple, raspberries, rhubarb, strawberries</p> <p>Dried fruit: apple, apricots, currants, coconut, dates, figs, prunes, raisins</p>
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	Foods to Eat	Foods To Avoid
Breads and Cereals	<p>Any baked goods made from refined flours (white flour) and allowed ingredients: bagels, biscuits, bread, buns, crackers, croissants, muffins (such as banana, apple spice, chocolate), pancakes, rolls, waffles</p> <p>Low-fiber, cooked and prepared cereals such as: Cheerios®, Corn Flakes®, Cream of Wheat®, Oatmeal, Plain Puffs®, Rice Krispies®, Special K®</p> <p>Pasta (fresh or canned) such as: macaroni, spaghetti, couscous, fettuccini</p> <p>White rice and barley (cooked very soft and chewed well)</p>	<p>Coarse whole grain breads which contain fruit, nuts or seeds: breads and cereals made with whole grain, bran, cracked wheat or pumpernickel flour</p> <p>Breads, muffins, and cereals containing nuts, seeds, dried fruit, granola mix</p> <p>Brown or wild rice</p> <p>Quinoa</p> <p>Whole wheat pastas</p>
Fats	<p>Butter or margarine, shortening, lard, cooking oils, mayonnaise, salad dressing (seedless), sesame butter (tahini)</p>	

	Foods to Eat	Foods To Avoid
Sweets/Snacks	All sugars such as white, brown, icing, maple syrup, corn syrup, molasses, honey Baked goods made with allowed ingredients, eg. donuts, plain cookies, plain cheesecake Chocolate without nuts, cheesies, potato chips, pretzels Caramels, gum drops, jellybeans, hard candy, marshmallows, licorice Seedless jelly and jam	Donuts with raspberry, blueberry, strawberry and cherry filing Pie with fruit filling, cakes with poppy seeds, raisins, chopped nuts, coconut Cookies with nuts or dried fruits Trail mix Jam with seeds or peel (marmalade, strawberry, raspberry, blueberry)
Miscellaneous	Drinks: Nutritional supplements such as EnsurePlus®, BoostPlus®, Boost Fruit Juice Beverage, Breakfast Anytime® Mineral waters Carbonated beverages Ovaltine® Postum® Gatorade® Alcohol Coffee, tea Pizza (made with allowed ingredients and a thin crust) Popsicles Mild herbs and spices Condiments: vinegar ketchup mustard BBQ sauce	Popcorn Condiments: pickles chutney olives

Minimal fibre diet

Minimal fibre diet

This diet may be needed if your symptoms get worse and happen more often. This diet has less fibre than the Low Fibre Diet. If on this diet you continue to have abdominal stomach pain and cramping, you may need to lower your fibre intake even more. Contact your health care team.

	Foods to Eat	Foods To Avoid
Milk and Milk Products	<p>Fluid milk and milk beverages</p> <p>Cheese such as cottage cheese, hard cheese, Cheese Whiz®, cheese slices, parmesan cheese</p> <p>Cream soups made with recommended ingredients</p> <p>Desserts such as Cool Whip®, puddings, yogurt, sherbet, ice cream</p>	<p>Cheese with seeds</p> <p>Yogurt mixed with fruits with seeds, tough skins or membranes (strawberry, raspberry, blueberry and cherry)</p>
Meat, Fish, Poultry, and Meat Alternatives	<p>Meats prepared by baking, broiling, roasting, poaching, and stewing: fish, poultry, lamb, beef, pork, veal, ham, rabbit, organ meats</p> <p>Shrimp, lobster, crab and other shell fish</p> <p>Eggs (all types)</p> <p>Smooth nut spreads such as smooth peanut butter</p> <p>Tofu</p> <p>Well pureed hummus</p>	<p>Nuts and seeds</p> <p>Beans and lentils</p> <p>Sausages and other processed meats such as hot dogs or bologna with casings or skins</p> <p>European frankfurters and other deli-made wieners</p> <p>Chunky nut spreads such as chunky peanut butter</p>

	Foods to Eat	Foods To Avoid
Vegetables	Strained vegetable juices, without pulp, such as V8® drink Pureed soups A small amount of tomato sauce may be tolerated.	All other vegetables
Fruits	Fruit drinks Strained fruit juices, without pulp	All other fruits
Breads and Cereals	<p>Any baked goods made from refined flours (white flour) and allowed ingredients: bagels, biscuits, bread, buns, crackers, croissants, pancakes, rolls, waffles and muffins such as banana, apple spice or chocolate</p> <p>Low-fiber, cooked and prepared cereals such as: Cheerios®, Corn Flakes®, Cream of Wheat®, Plain Puffs®, Rice Krispies®, Special K®</p> <p>Pasta (fresh or canned) such as macaroni, spaghetti, couscous, fettuccini</p> <p>White rice</p>	<p>Coarse whole grain breads which contain fruit, nuts or seeds: breads and cereals made with whole grain, bran, cracked wheat or pumpernickel flour</p> <p>Breads, muffins, and cereals containing nuts, seeds, dried fruit, granola mix, oatmeal</p> <p>Brown or wild rice</p> <p>Barley</p> <p>Quinoa</p> <p>Whole wheat pastas</p>
Fats	Butter or margarine, shortening, lard, cooking oils, mayonnaise, salad dressing (seedless), sesame butter (tahini)	

	Foods to Eat	Foods To Avoid
Sweets/Snacks	<p>All sugars such as white, brown, icing, maple syrup, corn syrup, molasses, honey</p> <p>Baked goods made with allowed ingredients such as donuts, plain cookies or plain cheesecake</p> <p>Chocolate without nuts, cheesies, potato chips, pretzels</p> <p>Caramels, gum drops, jellybeans, hard candy, marshmallows, licorice</p> <p>Seedless jelly and jam</p>	<p>Donuts with raspberry, blueberry, strawberry and cherry filing</p> <p>Pie with fruit filling, cakes with poppy seeds, raisins, chopped nuts, coconut</p> <p>Cookies with nuts or dried fruits</p> <p>Trail mix</p> <p>Jam with seeds or peel (marmalade, strawberry, raspberry, blueberry)</p>
<p>Miscellaneous</p> <p>To help decrease gas production, avoid chewing gum and allow carbonated beverages to go flat and avoid using a straw.</p>	<p>Drinks:</p> <p>Nutritional supplements such as EnsurePlus®, BoostPlus®, Boost Fruit Juice Beverage, Breakfast Anytime®</p> <p>Mineral waters</p> <p>Carbonated beverages</p> <p>Ovaltine®</p> <p>Postum®</p> <p>Gatorade®</p> <p>Alcohol</p> <p>Coffee, tea</p> <p>Pizza (made with allowed ingredients and a thin crust)</p> <p>Popsicles</p> <p>Mild herbs and spices</p> <p>Condiments:</p> <p>vinegar</p> <p>ketchup</p> <p>mustard</p> <p>BBQ sauce</p>	<p>Popcorn</p> <p>Condiments:</p> <p>pickles</p> <p>chutney</p> <p>olives</p>

Fluid diet

Fluid diet

You may need to follow this diet if you have severe symptoms with occasional vomiting after eating solid foods. This diet has little to no fibre. Fluids are important for keeping your skin, eyes, and the linings of your mouth moist, as well as preventing dehydration. **Avoid all solid foods when on a fluid diet.**

Type of Food	Recommended Choices	Avoid
Milk and Milk Products	All milk beverages. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • chocolate milk • buttermilk • milkshakes without pieces of fruit Yogurt, plain or flavoured Hot chocolate or cocoa	Yogurt with nuts, seeds, grains or pieces of fruit such as strawberry or peach
Cereals	Refined cooked cereals such as Cream of Wheat®	All others with pieces of fruit, nuts or seeds
Fruits and Vegetables	Fruit and vegetable juice without pulp	All others
Soups	Pureed soups, strained creamed soups, bouillon and consomme	All others
Desserts	Pudding, fruit whip, custard, yogurt, plain gelatin desserts, ice cream, ice milk, popsicles, sherbet	All others made with coconut, fruit, nuts or whole fruit Rice and tapioca pudding

Type of Food	Recommended Choices	Avoid
Beverages	Nutritional supplements such as, Ensure®, Boost Fruit Beverage® Carbonated beverages, crystal fruit drinks, sport drinks, coffee and tea	All others.
Sweets	Honey, plain sugar and hard candy	All others.
Seasonings	Ground seasonings as tolerated	

Skim milk powder

To increase your protein and calories intake, add 1 to 2 tablespoons of skim milk powder to ½ to 1 cup serving of milk or full fluid item.

Your needs may be different. Talk to your dietitian.