

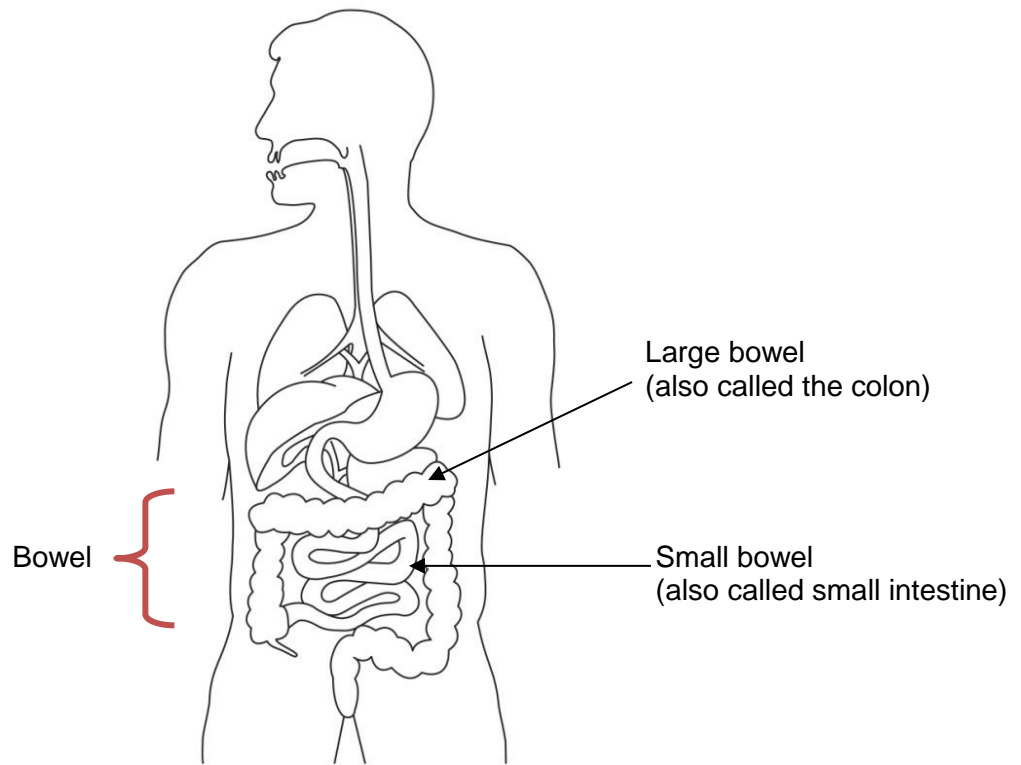
# What to eat when you have Short Bowel Syndrome

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## What is Short Bowel Syndrome?

Your bowel is an organ, shaped like a long tube, and is made up of the small and large bowel. The small bowel is about 15 to 20 feet long (450 to 600 centimetres). Your bowel absorbs nutrients in the food and liquids you eat and drink.

When a large part of your bowel is removed, you will have difficulty absorbing enough calories, vitamins, minerals and liquid. This is called, Short Bowel Syndrome or SBS.



## What are the symptoms of SBS?

The main symptoms of SBS are:

- diarrhea (which can make you dehydrated) and steatorrhea (fatty stool)
- cramping
- bloating and gas
- heartburn
- weakness/fatigue
- weight loss

Symptoms of dehydration:

- thirst
- dry, sticky mouth
- light headedness
- dark, strong smelling urine and decreased amount
- fast heart beat
- rapid weight loss
- weakness/fatigue

Making changes to your diet will help you to absorb food and liquids better and also manage your symptoms.

### **Your diet is based on:**

- the length and type of small bowel remaining
  - how well it functions/works and
  - if you have any colon remaining
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## Changes to help improve your symptoms

### 1. Eat 6 to 8 small meals a day:

- Small meals help control your symptoms, and help to digest and absorb your food better.
- Eat slowly and chew your food well.
- Separate solids and liquids (drinks) at meals as much as possible:
  - Solids move slowly out of your stomach. Liquids empty more quickly from your stomach. For more information on liquids, see page 5.

### 2. Limit or avoid certain types of carbohydrate to reduce diarrhea and bloating:

- **Simple carbohydrates** (also called simple sugars). These are found in foods such as juice, regular pop, cake, cookies, table sugar, syrup, honey, candy, and jam.
  - **Fermentable carbohydrates:**
    - **Lactose** - is a simple sugar found in milk and milk products. You may need to follow a low-lactose diet if you are lactose intolerant.
    - **Sugar alcohols** (such as xylitol, sorbitol, and mannitol). Sugar alcohols can be found in chewing gum, diet candies, and some diet baked products. They are also found naturally in some fruit such as apples, pears and fruits with a pit or stone such as apricots, cherries and peaches.
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3. Eat foods high in complex carbohydrates or starches.

Main sources include:

- breads
- rice
- pasta
- potatoes
- cereals
- crackers
- legumes (such as chick peas, kidney beans and lentils)

4. Watch the amount and types of fibre you eat:

- **Insoluble fibre** comes from the tougher part of plants and is hard to digest. It can make food pass through your bowels faster, and may worsen diarrhea. You may need to limit or avoid foods high in insoluble fibre (such as the skins of fruit and vegetables, nuts, seeds, corn, and high fibre cereals).
- **Soluble fibre** is usually better tolerated. It thickens stool and delays stomach emptying. Have more foods with soluble fibre such as oats, oat bran, bananas, ground flaxseed, psyllium and carrots.

## Fats and Oils

If you have a colon, limit how much fats and oils (such as butter, margarine, vegetable oil, mayonnaise or fried foods) you eat.

If you do not have a colon, you do not need to limit how much fats and oils you eat.

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## Oxalates

If you have a colon, you may need to avoid oxalates. (Refer to “Low Oxalate Diet in Short Bowel Syndrome” patient education handout).

**See page 8 for an example of a 2000 calorie meal plan.**

## Liquids

These tips on having liquids may help your body absorb food and water better. They will also help prevent diarrhea.



1. Have most of your liquids between meals rather than with meals (1 hour before and after). Limit liquids at meals to ½ cup (4 oz). Drinking large amounts of liquids with meals will move food faster through your bowel.
  2. Avoid high sugar drinks (juice, regular pop, fruit drinks such as fruit punch, lemonade or iced tea).
  3. You may need to avoid alcohol and sources of caffeine such as coffee, tea, energy drinks and chocolate.
  4. If you are having a lot of diarrhea, your health care team may ask you to drink an oral rehydration solution.
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## Oral-rehydration solutions

Oral-rehydration solutions have the right mix of salt, sugar and water that improve the absorption of liquid in the small bowel. This can help prevent dehydration. You will absorb the liquid in these drinks even if you have diarrhea.

Common solutions available in stores:

- Gastrolyte
- Pedialyte
- Electrolyte

## Recipes

Home-made oral rehydration solutions:

1. 1 litre ( 4 cups) of Gatorade® or G2®  
3 ml (½ tsp) salt  
Shake well to dissolve
  
  2. 1 litre (4 cups) of water  
5 ml (1 tsp) of salt  
30 ml (6 tsp) of sugar  
Crystal Light to taste (especially lemonade or orange-pineapple flavours)  
Shake well to dissolve
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## Medications and nutrition supplements

Your health care team may recommend you take specific medications and/or vitamin and mineral supplements to help manage your condition. Be sure to take as directed.

## Recommendations

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Imperial and Metric Sizes		
1 cup	=	250 ml
3/4 cup	=	175 ml
1/2 cup	=	125 ml
1/4 cup	=	60 ml
1 tablespoon (Tbsp)	=	15 ml
1 teaspoon (tsp)	=	5 ml
1 ounce (oz)	=	30 grams

## 2000 calorie sample meal plan

Breakfast	2 eggs ½ bagel 4 oz regular or lactose free milk 1 Tbsp butter or margarine
Morning Snack	1 slice bread 1 to 2 Tbsp peanut butter 1 pear
Lunch	4 oz ham 1 medium sized whole wheat wrap 2 oz cheese ½ cup cucumber Lettuce 1 tsp mayonnaise
Afternoon Snack	2 packages of melba toast 2 oz cheese, or tuna with 1 tsp mayonnaise ½ banana
Dinner	4 oz salmon or chicken 1 large baked sweet potato or 1 cup rice 1 Tbsp margarine
Evening Snack	2 rice cakes

Your health care team will recommend the type and amount of liquid to have with and between meals.