

*If you have  
any questions,  
please ask your  
physician or  
nurse.*

## Pelvic Radiation Diet Guidelines

Radiation to the pelvis may cause some side effects that affect your ability to eat well during treatment. Some possible side effects may include:

- Gas
- Stomach discomfort
- Pain or burning with urination
- Diarrhea

### Ways to help reduce gas

#### **Swallow less air**

How and what we eat can cause gas. Here are some suggestions to swallow less air:

- Eat slowly and chew well.
- Avoid talking a lot while eating.
- Do not use straws.
- Avoid chewing gum or sucking on hard candies or mints.
- Avoid fizzy drinks (pop/soda, beers/ales, carbonated water).
- Do not smoke.

#### **Try to have frequent, regular bowel movements**

Gas can be caused by not having a bowel movement every day or every other day. Here are some suggestions to keep your bowels regular:

- Go for a walk or stretch for 30 minutes most days of the week, if you are able to. This helps gas and bowel contents move through the intestines.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Aim for 8 cups of water each day.
- Avoid lactose-containing foods if you are lactose intolerant. Lactose is in dairy products. It is highest in milk and ice cream.
- Do not skip meals.

#### **Pay attention to foods which cause gas**

Foods that cause gas can be different from person to person. Try to figure out which foods make you gassy and avoid eating these during treatment. Some common gas-producing foods:

- Sugar-free candies, gums and soft drinks

- Gas-producing vegetables: broccoli, mushrooms, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, corn, garlic, leeks, onions, peas, and legumes such as baked beans, kidney beans, split peas and lentils
- Gas-producing fruits: prunes, prune juice, apple juice and dried fruits

## Ways to help burning with urination

Painful urination can happen with pelvic radiation. It is important to let your healthcare team know if you have pain when you urinate. They will need to check for infection or other causes. Sometimes the foods we eat or drink can cause painful urination.

- Aim to drink at least 8 cups of water each day.
- Avoid acidic beverages such as coffee, tea, soda, tomato-based juice and alcohol.
- Check with your radiation team about drinking cranberry juice to help with symptoms.

## Ways to help diarrhea

Part of your large bowel or colon may be in the treatment area. This part of your body is sensitive to radiation. As a result, abdominal cramping and diarrhea can occur. Follow these guidelines to help with diarrhea:

- Avoid gas-producing foods and behaviors that may increase gas (see above).
- Avoid foods high in lactose. High-lactose foods can make diarrhea worse. Lactose is in dairy products. It is highest in milk and ice cream. It is lowest in hard cheeses and yogurt.
- Avoid greasy/fried foods. High-fat foods are hard to digest. This can make diarrhea worse.
- Avoid spicy foods. If you do not eat spicy foods regularly, they can be hard to digest.
- Eat 5 to 6 small meals/snacks each day. Eat small amounts (1 cup of food or less) to avoid stomach upset. Make up for small amounts by eating more often.
- Avoid insoluble fiber. Choose more foods with soluble fiber.

### ***Fiber in foods***

There are 2 types of dietary fiber – soluble fiber and insoluble fiber.

- Soluble fiber is good to eat if you are having diarrhea. It helps make your stool solid.
- Insoluble fiber is bad to eat if you are having diarrhea. It can make you have bowel movements more often.

Heating foods can break down fiber. Heat from the canning process can break down fiber. Steaming certain vegetables can also lower their insoluble fiber content.

<b>Soluble fiber foods (OK to eat)</b>	
Fruits	Avocado Banana Peeled apples or applesauce
Vegetables (steamed/cooked/peeled)	Carrots White potatoes or sweet potatoes Summer squash (de-seeded and peeled) Zucchini (de-seeded and peeled)
Grains	White bread French bread White pasta White rice
<b>Insoluble fiber foods (Try to avoid)</b>	
Fruits	Berries Dried fruits Most raw fruits and unpeeled fruits
Vegetables	Gas-producing vegetables (see attached) Dried beans/lentils/legumes Most raw/unpeeled vegetables
Grains	Hearty grain products (12 grain wheat bread, muesli, wheat bran)
Nuts/seeds	All nuts, including nut butters

Eat other low-fiber foods. These include:

- Cream of rice, rice or corn cold cereals, pancakes, waffles, and flour tortillas
- Meats and protein such as beef, chicken, fish, pork, turkey and eggs. (Limit bacon and pork sausage)
- Low-lactose dairy products such as hard cheese and yogurt without fruit

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## 7-day low-fiber meal plan

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks
Rice cereal Banana 1% milk (lactose-free if needed)	Quesadilla made with shredded beef and cheese	Square of lasagna French bread 1/2 avocado	Cottage cheese
Slice of banana bread Hardboiled egg	Grilled cheese sandwich Noodle soup	Sweet potato chicken bake	Cheese and saltine crackers
Slice of white toast Avocado 2 scrambled eggs with cheese	Tuna salad sandwich (tuna and low fat mayo only) on white bread Pretzels	Pork chops Applesauce or peeled apple	Graham crackers Applesauce
1 plain bagel with cream cheese 1 carton of vanilla yogurt	Bowl made with white rice, roasted chicken, sweet potatoes, zucchini (de-seeded)	Baked salmon White rice Summer squash (deseeded)	2 hardboiled eggs
2 waffles with syrup 2 scrambled eggs	Lean cheeseburger on white bun Steamed carrots	Dijon chicken thighs with mashed sweet potatoes (no skin)	Angel food cake with whipped topping
Vanilla yogurt with Cheerios® on top	Turkey sandwich with cheese on white bread Applesauce Pretzels	Roast beef Mashed potatoes Roasted carrots	Cornflakes with milk Banana
Vanilla yogurt with Cheerios on top	Flatbread cheese pizza (Pita or naan bread with pizza sauce and cheese) Steamed zucchini (deseeded)	Spaghetti with meatballs French bread	Pretzels Cheese stick