

Radiotherapy department

Dietary advice: reducing diarrhoea during radiotherapy

Diarrhoea is the word used to describe very thin, watery poo, usually associated with a very frequent bowel habit.

A good fluid intake is very important to prevent you becoming dehydrated if you have diarrhoea. Aim for at least 10–12 drinks per day. It is worth being aware that tea, coffee (and other caffeine-based drinks) may stimulate the movement of the bowel and increase problems with diarrhoea.

Unfortunately finding out which foods may affect a person can be 'hit and miss' at times and very much a process of elimination. People will not always experience the same problems. Please use the food and symptom diary overleaf to try to identify foods which may affect you.

Tips to reduce diarrhoea

- Identify the potential causes of diarrhoea in **your diet** and try to reduce them.
- Replace wholewheat or oat-based cereals with Rice Krispies, Cornflakes or Special K.
- Replace wholewheat biscuits with biscuits made from white flour such as Rich Tea, Marie biscuits or custard creams.
- Avoid nuts and pulses (baked beans, kidney beans, peas and lentils).
- Take only small amounts of fruit and vegetables and avoid eating the skin.
- Some people find it helpful to cut down on fat by avoiding fried foods, pastries, cream cakes and fatty meat.

If you have followed a lower fibre diet and are still having problems with diarrhoea please speak to a member of your treating team as medications may be helpful.

There is further information about coping with bowel problems in the booklet about radiotherapy for your specific cancer and 'Eating – help yourself'.

The Christie Hotline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and can provide help and support at every stage of treatment. All patients having radiotherapy can contact the Hotline for support and advice for radiotherapy reactions. Call **0161 446 3658**.



Food and symptom diary

Please use this to try to identify foods which may affect you.

Date	Time	Food/drink/medication taken	How much	What was the symptom/reaction	How long did it last
Example	7.30am	Bran flakes and brown toast	1 bowl and 2 slices	Diarrhoea	2 episodes in the afternoon

If you need information in a different format, such as easy read, large print, BSL, braille, email, SMS text or other communication support, please tell your ward or clinic nurse.

We try to ensure that all our information given to patients is accurate, balanced and based on the most up-to-date scientific evidence. If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact patient.information@christie.nhs.uk

For information and advice visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham, Salford or Macclesfield. Opening times can vary, please check before making a special journey.

Contact The Christie Hotline for
urgent support and specialist advice
The Christie Hotline: 0161 446 3658
Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

