

Low Residue Diet Guidelines

By Dr. Jose Erbella

A low-residue diet limits the amount of fiber and other undigested material that passes through your large intestine. As a result, a low-residue diet reduces the size and number of your stools, helping to relieve abdominal pain, diarrhea or flare-ups of certain digestive problems, such as diverticulitis and helps in your recovery after bowel surgery.

The following foods **can be** eaten as part of a low-residue diet:

- Refined breads, crackers, chips and pasta with less than 1 gram of fiber per serving (Note: Ideally, look for products with zero grams of dietary fiber per serving.)
- Plain cereals e.g. Cheerios, Cornflakes, Cream of Wheat, Rice Krispies, & Special K
- White rice
- Vegetable juices without seeds or pulp
- Fruit juices with no pulp
- Milk, yogurt, pudding, ice cream, and cream-based soups and sauces (strained)
- Tender meat, poultry, fish and eggs
- Oil, margarine, butter and mayonnaise
- Smooth salad dressings
- Broth-based soups (strained)
- Jelly, honey and syrup
- Applesauce, apricots, banana (1/2), cantaloupe, canned fruit cocktail, grapes, honeydew melon, peaches, watermelon
- Well-cooked and tender vegetables including alfalfa sprouts, beets, green/yellow beans, carrots, celery, cucumber, eggplant, lettuce, mushrooms, green/red peppers, squash, & zucchini

While consuming a low-residue diet, limit dairy products (such as milk, yogurt, pudding, ice cream, and cream-based soups and sauces) to no more than 2 cups a day. Also, take a **multivitamin** once daily and if you do not eat yogurt, consider a **pro-biotic** supplement.

You should **avoid**:

- Whole-grain breads, cereals and pasta
- Whole vegetables and vegetable sauces
- Vegetables from the cruciferous family such as broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, cabbage, kale, Swiss chard, etc.
- Whole fruits, including canned fruits
- Tough or coarse meats with gristle and luncheon meats or cheese with seeds
- Peanut butter
- Salad dressings with seeds or pieces of fruits or vegetables
- Seeds and nuts
- Beans and lentils
- Coconut
- Marmalade

FOOD GROUP	FOODS ALLOWED	FOODS TO AVOID
Beverages	Coffee, tea, decaffeinated coffee and tea, cocoa, carbonated beverages, fruit flavored drinks without pulp.	Any beverages containing foods not allowed; alcoholic beverages
Breads & Cereals 6-11 servings	Refined white, light wheat or rye bread and rolls; saltines, or soda crackers. All refined, cooked and ready-to-eat cereals (corn, oats, wheat and rice) such as Wheathearts, Malt-O-Meal, Cornflakes®, Special K®, Cheerios®, Post Toasties.	Rolls with nuts, seeds, coconut or fruit not allowed; bread containing cracked wheat particles or whole seeds; coarse, dry cereals; any with bran or raisins. All others not listed as allowed. Graham crackers, corn bread.
Desserts Avoid too many sweets	All plain; puddings, junket, custard, tapioca, gelatin desserts, fruit whips, smooth ice cream, fruit ice, plain sherbet, yogurt, cake and cookies. Pie made with allowed fruits.	Rich pastry or cakes. Those with nuts, seeds, raisins, coconut, dates or fruits not allowed on list.
Eggs 3/week	All	Egg dishes prepared with ingredients not allowed.
Fats Use in moderation	Butter, margarine, cooking oil, cream, milk salad dressings and mayonnaise, as tolerated. Bacon, plain gravies.	Nuts, olives. All others.
Fruits & Fruit Juices 2 servings a day	Fruit juice without pulp. Canned: applesauce, cherries, fruit cocktail, peaches Fresh: bananas, cherries, grapefruit, melon, nectarine, peaches, plum	Prune juice Canned: pineapple, pears Fresh: apples, apricot, avocado, berries, mango, pear, dried dates, figs, prunes, raisins
Meat or Meat substitute 5-7 ounces per day	Tender, broiled, stewed or creamed, roast beef, veal, lamb, pork, ham, poultry, fish, chopped clams, oysters, sweetbreads, liver, kidneys; cream cheese, cottage, American, cheddar, Swiss or jack cheese, smooth peanut butter.	Fried meats, fish or poultry; meats highly seasoned or containing whole spices; sausage, frankfurters, strong cheeses or those containing seeds. Dried beans or peas, chunky peanut butter. All others not listed as allowed.
Milk Limit to 2 cups/day	All.	None except those with seeds, nuts or fruits not allowed. For low residue, limit milk to 2 cups per day.
Potatoes & Substitutes	White and sweet potatoes (no skins); refined rice, macaroni, spaghetti, noodles.	All others.
Soups	Creamed soups with pureed or whole allowed vegetables; strained vegetable soups or chowders, meat or fish broths.	Highly seasoned soups or those containing ingredients other than on allowed list.
Vegetables & Vegetable Juice 2 servings per day	Cooked or canned artichoke hearts, asparagus, beets, carrots, chard, green and wax beans, bean sprouts, mushrooms, pimiento, pumpkin. Fresh and cooked tomato (no seeds or skins), stewed, pastes, purees. Tomato juice. Limit vegetables to 2 servings per day and less than 2 gm fiber per serving.	All other raw, strongly flavored vegetables (cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, summer squash, okra, Brussels sprouts, parsnips, rutabagas, turnips, onions, corn, baked beans). All others not listed as allowed.
Miscellaneous	Sugar, jelly, honey, syrup, plain candy. Salt, pepper, flavoring extracts, herbs and seasonings not listed to avoid; milk gravies and cream sauces; barbecue sauce, mustard, ketchup.	Any on not allowed list; jam, marmalade, fruit preserves, plain chocolate. Chili pepper, curry powder, cloves, seed spices, coconut, horseradish, popcorn, pickles, salsa, relish, chutney, all seeds such as poppy, sesame and caraway.