

## Low Residue Diet

It has been recommended that you follow a low-residue diet during your radiotherapy. We would like you to start this diet approximately **two weeks before your radiotherapy planning** appointment and continue until your radiotherapy treatment has finished. **After treatment** you should **return to your normal diet gradually**.

### What is a low-residue diet?

It is similar to a low-fibre diet but also restricts other foods that are low in fibre which are known to leave behind a residue in the bowel. "Residue" refers to the material left over after the body digests everything it can from the foods we have eaten. Fibre is very difficult to break down and so passes through the body undigested; it adds bulk to the stool.

### Why have I been asked to follow a low residue diet?

A low-residue diet will make it less likely that a large section of your bowel will be irradiated, decreasing your risk of treatment side-effects such as diarrhoea. It will help to reduce the *number* and *size* of stools, and therefore the size of the bowel.

The diet must be started before your radiotherapy planning appointment and continued until your treatment has finished, so that each time you attend your bowel is a similar size and shape.

### General Guidelines

- Peel all fruits and vegetables and remove pips/seeds as this is where most of the fibre is contained.
- Cook fruits and vegetables thoroughly to reduce their fibre content.
- Consume caffeine in moderation, aiming for an intake of less than 300mg of caffeine per day. This is equivalent to 6 cups of tea or 4 cups of instant coffee per day.
- Do not go above recommended guidelines for alcohol consumption: 2-3 units per day for women, 3-4 units per day for men (1 unit = 100mls of wine, 250mls of beer or 25ml of spirits).

- You must drink enough fluid to prevent dehydration and assist with regular bowel motions. Most people need between 2 – 3 litres of fluid per day; the more you weigh the more fluid you will require. If your urine is light coloured this is a good sign you are getting enough fluid.

### Foods to include

- White bread, buns and bagels, chapattis, naans, popadums (made with white/corn flour)
- Plain, low-fibre cereals (for example Rice Krispies, Corn Flakes, Cheerios, Special K)
- White rice, white pasta and noodles
- Fruit juices without pulp\*
- Ripe, soft fruit (preferably peeled and cooked)\*
- Well-cooked vegetables (peeled with seeds removed)\*
- Meat and fish
- Eggs
- Milk and any yoghurt that does not contain real fruit pieces
- Cheese
- Butter, mayonnaise, vegetable oils, margarine, gravies, dressings and sauces.

**\* Ideally these foods should be avoided but up to two portions of either fruit, vegetables or fruit juice may be included each day.**

### Foods to avoid

- Wholegrain breads, pasta and bran
- High fibre breakfast cereals (for example Bran Flakes, Muesli, Porridge, cereals containing dried fruit or nuts)
- High-fibre crackers or crisp-breads (for example Ryvita)
- Fruit/vegetable juices with pulp
- Dried Fruit
- Beans and pulses
- Raw vegetables
- Nuts and seeds
- Popcorn

### **Flavouring food**

Once vegetables such as tomatoes and onions have been removed from the diet, it may seem a little bland. Garlic, dried herbs and spices can still be used to flavour cooking. Passata (sieved tomatoes) and tomato puree can also be used to replace tomatoes in recipes.

### **What if I am vegetarian/vegan?**

If you are a vegetarian you are more likely to get a large proportion of your protein needs from beans and pulses. As we have asked you to limit your intake of these products it is important to try to increase your intake of other protein sources such as milk, eggs, yoghurt, cheese and tofu.

### **What if I have diabetes?**

You can still follow this diet during treatment if you are diabetic. Once treatment is complete you can return to your normal diet.

### **What if I become constipated?**

Your bowel adapts to your regular fibre intake, therefore people who normally have a very high fibre diet are more likely to become constipated whilst following the low-residue diet. It is essential you do not become constipated as this can delay your planning and treatment. If you feel you are becoming constipated please inform a member of the radiotherapy team. Ensuring you are as active as possible and drinking lots of fluids will also help to prevent constipation.

**Should you require any further information regarding this diet please contact the Dietetics department on 01923 844366.**

**For queries regarding radiotherapy issues please call 01923 826111 and ask for the Clinic Radiographer bleep 6130.**