

Low residue diet

A low residue diet is a diet in which fibre and other foods, that are harder for your body to digest, are restricted. Fibre is made up of plant material that cannot be completely digested by the body. High fibre foods include whole-grain breads and cereals, nuts, seeds, and raw or dried fruits. Residue refers to undigested foods, including fibre, that make up stool.

When might you need to follow a low residue diet?

A low residue diet may be recommended if parts of the intestinal wall (bowel) are inflamed or damaged or the passage is restricted, due to a blockage or narrowing. Following a low residue diet can help the stool to pass more easily through the bowel.

Low residue diet: foods to enjoy

Eating a low residue/low fibre diet sometimes goes against some of the standard healthy eating messages because it limits fibre intake, however it is still possible for it to be balanced and you can still have small amounts of some fruits and vegetables.

The information below provides some ideas on which foods are suitable or unsuitable. The diet is often very individual and relies on a degree of trial and error. If a food can pass through a sieve then it can be assumed it can pass through a stricture in the bowel. If there are any foods you particularly miss that can be blended to a smooth paste e.g. vegetable puree, this often means you can enjoy that food still.

Carbohydrates

Food to AVOID:

- ✗ Wholemeal/granary bread, added fibre white bread, brown chapatti, wholemeal pitta, rye bread, any bread containing extra bran
- ✗ Wholegrain pasta/noodles
- ✗ Brown rice
- ✗ Biscuits, cakes and pastry made with coarse wholemeal flour, oats, dried fruit or nuts e.g. digestives, hobnobs, garibaldi, fig rolls, fruit shortcake, flapjacks, cereal bars, fruit cake, mince pies, teacakes, fruit scone, danish pastry
- ✗ Wholegrain cereals e.g. Bran Flakes, All-Bran, Weetabix, Muesli, porridge, Shredded Wheat, Fruit and Fibre and any cereals with added nuts, seeds or dried fruit
- ✗ Rye crispbreads, wholemeal crackers, oatcakes, Ryvita
- ✗ Any potato skins

What to have INSTEAD:

- ✓ White bread, white chapatti, white pitta, croissants
- ✓ White pasta/noodles
- ✓ White rice
- ✓ Biscuits, cakes and pastry made with white flour e.g. rich tea, custard creams, chocolate coated, shortbread, éclairs, sponge cake, plain scone.
- ✓ Refined cereals e.g. Rice Krispies, Cornflakes, Coco pops, Frosties
- ✓ Cream crackers, rice cakes, white bread sticks, water biscuits
- ✓ Any potato without skin

Protein

Food to AVOID:

- ✗ Avoid skin, bone and gristle
- ✗ Avoid fish where you eat the bones such as whitebait or tinned salmon
- ✗ All pulses and lentils
- ✗ Nuts and seeds

What to have INSTEAD:

- ✓ Lean meat and poultry
- ✓ Eggs in any form
- ✓ Fish not containing bones – white fish, fresh salmon, tinned tuna
- ✓ If you are vegetarian/vegan and rely on non-animal protein sources, choose smooth hummus or similar pulse puree

Dairy

Food to AVOID:

- ✗ Any yoghurts with bits

What to have INSTEAD:

- ✓ Smooth dairy products including cheese, yoghurt and milk

Vegetables (Should be well cooked until soft)

Food to AVOID:

- ✗ Raw vegetables
- ✗ Potato skins
- ✗ Celery
- ✗ Sweetcorn
- ✗ Beans (French, green or runner)
- ✗ Leeks
- ✗ Mushrooms
- ✗ Peas
- ✗ Green leafy veg (cabbage, kale, spinach, sprouts)
- ✗ Raw salad vegetables

What to have INSTEAD:

- ✓ Potato/sweet potato without skins
- ✓ Butternut squash
- ✓ Carrots
- ✓ Parsnips
- ✓ Swede
- ✓ Turnip
- ✓ Peeled and deseeded cucumber
- ✓ Skinned & deseeded tomatoes
- ✓ Skinned & deseeded peppers
- ✓ Avocado
- ✓ Cauliflower & broccoli florets (no stalks)

Fruit (All fruit should be soft and ripe with skins and pips removed)

Food to AVOID:

- ✗ Dried fruit
- ✗ Fresh fruit with peel or seeds such as kiwi, strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, blueberries, rhubarb, pineapple, pomegranate, passion fruit,
- ✗ Unripe banana
- ✗ Fruit juices containing bits or smoothies

What to have INSTEAD:

- ✓ Banana
- ✓ Stewed apple
- ✓ Soft and de-skinned pears, peaches, nectarines
- ✓ Fruit juices without bits

Desserts

Food to AVOID:

- ✗ Puddings with dried fruit, nuts
- ✗ Puddings made with oats and wholemeal flour
- ✗ Pudding containing cooked fruit with pips or skins – e.g. berry crumbles

What to have INSTEAD:

- ✓ Milk puddings e.g. rice pudding, custard
- ✓ Jelly, ice-cream, mousse, sorbet
- ✓ Pastries, sponge pudding, trifle, pancakes

Sugar, jams and sweets

Food to AVOID:

✗ Jams or marmalade with pips or skin

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What to have INSTEAD:

✓ Honey

✓ Smooth jam

✓ Hard boiled sweets

✓ Jelly sweets

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