

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.

Unfortunately, it's not as simple as certain foods being safe and others unsafe. There are several factors that can determine whether people get bowel blockages and so the foods listed are those which are higher or lower risk. Choosing lower risk foods, eating small amounts at a time and chewing very well all reduce the risk but will not eliminate the risk of a blockage completely.

A low residue diet is often individual and relies on a degree of trial and error. Please ask to speak to the dietitian if you would like further support.

Carbohydrate foods

Bread and bread products are generally higher risk foods. Wholemeal/granary bread, added fibre white bread, brown chapatti, wholemeal pitta, rye bread and any bread containing extra bran, nuts, or seeds are particularly high risk.

Lower risk options are white bread, white chapatti, white pitta, croissants

Food to AVOID:

- ✗ 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 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 foods

Food to AVOID:

- ✗ Avoid skin, bone and gristle
- ✗ Avoid fish where you eat the bones such as whitebait or tinned salmon
- ✗ All pulses 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
- ✓ Avoid completely unless you are vegetarian/vegan and rely on non-animal protein sources. If so 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,
- ✓ Pastries, sponge pudding, trifle, pancakes

Sugar, jams and sweets

Food to AVOID:

- ✗ Jams or marmalade with pips or skin

What to have INSTEAD:

- ✓ Honey
- ✓ Smooth jam
- ✓ Hard boiled sweets
- ✓ Jelly sweets