



Managing Loose Bowels



Do not just accept loose bowels and mild diarrhea as inevitable. Learn what you can do to make things more comfortable.

Possible causes: fat problem, bile (gallbladder stuff) problem, lactose problem, pancreas/digestive enzyme problem, roughage problem, bacteria problem, malnutrition problem, anxiety problem.

First ask yourself, “Why this now?”

Call your doctor or nurse when diarrhea lasts more than a few days as a new symptom, or when you cannot keep your weight up.

- See if lactose, the sugar in dairy products, is the cause. Avoid regular milk, but lactose-free milk like Lactaid or yogurt might work. Aged cheese may be OK in small amounts, too.
- Cut back on fried and other fatty foods. Any fat, even margarine and olive oil, can stir up the intestines; you don’t need that.
- Cut down on the roughage or fiber in your diet.
- Eat smaller meals, and more of them – like 4 or 5 a day.

Other stuff that might help...

Take psyllium (like Metamucil) to paste stools together.

Ask your doctor whether taking bile acid sequestrants (Questran) or pancreatic enzymes would help you.

In general, eating peeled, cooked, and canned foods is helpful to your digestive system. So eat well-cooked, soft, easy-to-digest foods, like noodle and rice soups, baked chicken, potatoes, muffins, toast, canned peaches, canned pears, and cooked carrots.

Think, “I don’t want to stress my intestines with too much raw fiber, with irritating spices, or with hunks of fatty food.” What does stress out your guts?

The B.R.A.T. diet – *bananas, rice, applesauce, and toast* – is famous for slowing diarrhea.

The B.R.A.T. diet is good for a limited time. It is not nutritionally complete – you need to worry about proteins after a while.