

## DIET ADVICE IN GASTROINTESTINAL ILLNESS

If you are vomiting and/or have diarrhea you may require a temporary change in diet. However, you must drink fluids (as prescribed below) to prevent dehydration. You may also need a “time-out” from eating for a day or so to give the digestive system a rest. If nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea persist or recur, if you cannot stay hydrated, or if you have abdominal pain seek medical attention.

### Nausea and/or Vomiting

#### *Acute Stage*

During acute nausea and vomiting it is usually best to leave the stomach empty. Trying to ingest food or drink is likely to cause additional vomiting. Eating ice chips or drinking small sips of **clear liquids** (an ounce or two every 10-20 minutes), may help prevent development of dehydration. Avoid dairy products. **Suggested Clear Liquids:** Water, diluted Gatorade, weak tea with honey, flat ginger ale, or decaffeinated soda

#### *Next 24 hours*

Once symptoms are subsiding, you should continue to ingest **clear liquids, including diluted non-citrus fruit juices such as apple, grape or pear**. Volume should be increased, and **Jell-O or bouillon may be added**. Caffeine and alcohol should be avoided. If vomiting returns, go back to taking nothing by mouth for a few hours and then begin again with small amounts of clear liquids.

#### *Second day*

Begin adding easily digested foods and juices. **Suggestions:** Smooth cooked cereals (e.g. Cream of Wheat), fruit and vegetable juices such as apple juice (not orange or tomato), soups (clear-base broth), rice, toast and jelly, potato, banana, applesauce.

#### *Third day*

Progress to a “regular” diet by adding such things as **sherbet or sorbet, cottage cheese or yogurt, cooked vegetables, tofu, white meat chicken or turkey**. The last things to add are high fat foods such as cheese, ice cream, whole milk, or fried foods, and high protein foods such as red meat, nuts and seeds, legumes and beans.

### Diarrhea

When diarrhea occurs follow a clear liquid diet as outlined above. As the diarrhea slows, the diet may be advanced. During diarrhea it is usually advisable to avoid fruit and vegetable juices, which may exacerbate symptoms (substitute banana and applesauce), and to avoid dairy products (except for yogurt, which is naturally lactose free) until the third day.

### General Tips

During gastrointestinal illness, carbohydrates are more important and more easily digested than fat or protein.

Aspirin and ibuprofen can be upsetting to an already upset stomach, so if a medicine is needed for fever or pain it is best to use acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol).

**NOTE:** Persistent or recurrent symptoms, or symptoms accompanied by abdominal pain require prompt medical attention.