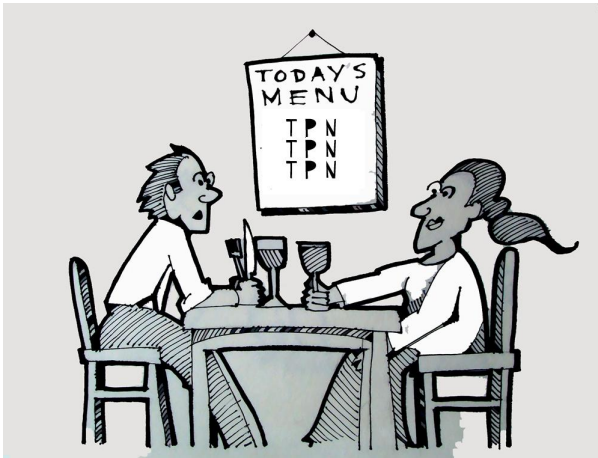


Designing Your Diet



Unfortunately, there are no easy answers when it comes to food and no rulebook that we can follow. Our bodies are all unique and so we need unique diets to make us feel healthy and energized. The diet for IBD patients is usually very customized- what bothers one person may be well tolerated by another. This complexity can be even harder to address in high school and university when Kraft Dinner, fries and alcohol are key elements of a normal diet.

Figuring out a diet that works can seem like rocket science, but monitoring what goes in and how it affects us can prove to be extremely helpful. We need to develop our own strategies and substitutions to deal with the pressures of fast food and fad diets.

Warning! We are not health practitioners and can only share tips that helped us create diets that worked for our IBD.

Getting Started....

- Request to consult with or get a referral to a DIETICIAN who is familiar with IBD. You can be evaluated on an individual basis and they can make recommendations geared towards your specific condition. They can assist you with strategies to maintain a food diary and keep track of problem foods. If you end up hospitalized, knowing what affects food have on your body will be a good way to help with your meal options to get better and when trying to keep healthy.

- Beware of people (including health practitioners and relatives) who recommend a single diet that is supposed to cure all intestinal diseases. IBD takes many different forms and your diet should generally be tailored to your particular problem.

KNOW YOUR TRIGGERS



IBD and FIBRE are often not friends.

IBD patients often lack the following: IRON, FOLIC ACID, B12. This means that probiotic food/drinks can be friends.

Smaller, more frequent meals can help to ease the pain of digestion.

Many IBD sufferers are LACTOSE INTOLERANT (milk products).

Beware of SPICY FOODS.

SEEDS, NUTS and COMPLEX FOODS (stringy, fibrous, skins) can be hard on the digestive system.

RAW FRUIT, VEGGIES and SALADS can be hard on the digestive system.

Watch out for DEHYDRATION caused by diarrhea. Avoid CAFFEINE, drink GATORADE and always drink a lot of WATER.

ALCOHOL and CAFFEINE are often unfriendly.

Food containing MSG and FRIED FOODS should also be watched.

GLUTEN could be an irritant. If you notice this, let your doctor know - they may want to check for CELIAC disease.

- Consult your doctor before taking any extra vitamins. Many IBD patients need to take extra supplements. One commonly recommended vitamin is Materna (it isn't only meant for pregnant ladies!) which provides extra folic acid and iron. Taking extra vitamins may reduce your body's reactions or flare-ups, which in turn could possibly help with fatigue or energy loss associated with IBD.

- Create your own diet and don't be scared to turn down food you know is hurtful. Be prepared and carry snacks that you know you can handle in case your food options aren't available.

Safe foods and Trigger Foods

There are some standard IBD safe foods and trigger foods (foods that upset your digestive tract) that may be helpful to avoid, eat sporadically or unfortunately not at all- depending on how they affect you. As we've mentioned, these vary for individuals so it is important to get to know your body by creating a SYMPTOM DIARY (see below). Certain foods will have an immediate effect, while others may take a couple hours before they cause discomfort.

Watch the danger zones!

Eating out and holiday celebrations can be painful! Ask servers about specific ingredients if you are unsure (MSG, milk, spice level, etc.). You may want to stick with more familiar dishes vs. risk pain on a night out or embarrassing situations.

Holidays are often associated with many trigger foods- alcohol, sugar, caffeine, lactose, etc. Don't torture yourself! Try these holiday foods in *moderation* but do not gorge- it is not worth having tons of pain over the holidays. Flare-ups are more common during the holidays, so be especially careful of food choices. At events such as weddings you may know the menu ahead, although it doesn't hurt to make requests. At any event that includes food (even at restaurants) you can request for the food you need.



SAFE FOODS vary from person to person but it is a good idea to get to know easily digestible options such as: White Bread, Rice, Applesauce, Meal Supplements, Drinks, Herbal Teas, Bananas and Eggs.

The **BRAT** diet (Bananas, Rice, Applesauce, Toast) is a digestive dream!

Chicken, turkey and white meat tend to be easier on the system than red meat.

SUBSTITUTE your favourite food with some creative alternatives.

- Flavoured rice cakes in place of popcorn
- Sugar alternatives/substitutes (eg. Crystal Light, Stevia (natural sugar substitute) in place of sugar drinks.
- Lactose free milk, rice milk or potato milk.
- Meal supplements (Ensure, Boost). If you don't like the taste,

PROBIOTICS are the good bacteria found in healthy intestines. Many new food products on the market contain probiotics. For some patients, there is a treatment for IBD being developed that uses probiotics to try to increase the good bacteria in the intestine. Check with your physician before using probiotics.

TPN: There may be periods of time when you need to be put on bowel rest. This means you are fed through an IV with TPN (Total Parenteral Nutrition). This means that you get fed through your veins so no food is going through your digestive tract. The TPN is completely designed for you (how much lipids, vitamins, etc). The nice part is you can leave the hospital still on TPN if it is necessary.

Creating a Symptom Diary

- The most important rule is to be honest.
- Keep track of everything you eat and at what times throughout the day.
- Monitor any adverse symptoms you experience.
- When you see it on paper, it may be easier to discover what food bothers you.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast							
Lunch							
Dinner							
Snacks							
Symptoms							
New additions							
Foods to track							

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