

Graft-Versus-Host Disease (GVHD) Diet Guidelines

Graft-Versus-Host Disease (GVHD) is a side effect of a stem cell transplant. It can upset the gastrointestinal (GI) tract and cause malabsorption. It may cause symptoms like diarrhea, abdominal pain, cramping, nausea, or heartburn. Eating easy-to-digest foods may improve these symptoms and help your gut heal.

Use this handout to help you choose easy-to-digest foods and drinks. Try to eat smaller more frequent meals and snacks. **Avoid** caffeine, alcohol and foods and drinks that are high in sugar or fat. Your dietitian can teach you more about this diet as desired.

Group 1

Try these foods first.

Breads/Grains

- Plain white breads (bagel, dinner roll, English muffin)
- Plain white pasta
- Plain white rice
- Plain grits
- Plain mashed potatoes (no skins)
- Plain hot cereal: Cream of Rice™, Cream of Wheat®
- Cold cereal: Rice Krispies®, Cheerios®, Corn flakes®, Rice Chex™
- Saltine crackers

Fruits

- Applesauce
- Banana
- Peaches or pears (canned, drained)

Other

- Popsicles
- Broth (chicken, vegetable, beef)

Drinks

- Decaf tea (avoid peppermint tea)
- Rice milk, soy milk, almond milk, Lactaid® milk
- Apple juice or cranberry juice diluted with water (4 oz juice + 4 oz water)
- Gatorade G2® or Powerade Zero®
- Drip Drop® or Pedialyte®

Nutrition Supplements

- Glucerna or Ensure Max Protein®
- Gelatin®

Other

- Popsicles
- Broth (chicken, vegetable, beef)

Group 2

If you tolerate the foods in group 1, start slowly adding foods from group 2. Still include foods from group 1 in your diet.

Breads/Grains

- Bread (sourdough, rice)
- Pancakes
- Waffles
- Tortillas (white or corn)
- Flat bread (white)
- Lightly buttered white pasta
- Ramen noodles
- Honey Nut Cheerios™
- Graham crackers

Meats/Proteins

- Fish (baked, poached or grilled tilapia, cod, salmon, walleye)
- Chicken (baked or grilled, skinless)
- Turkey breast (roasted)
- Turkey burger

- Eggs (scrambled, hard boiled, plain omelet)
- Reheated deli meats (turkey, lean ham)
- Chicken noodle soup

Vegetables

- Cooked carrots
- Cooked green beans

Fruits

- Cantaloupe
- Honeydew
- Watermelon

Dairy

(Take with Lactaid[®] supplement as needed)

- Low-fat yogurt
- Low-fat cottage cheese
- Low-fat cheese

Fats

(*Limit use)

- Fat-free mayo
- Fat-free salad dressings
- Non-dairy creamer
- Margarine or butter*

Other

- Mrs. Dash[®]
- Cinnamon
- Salt
- Sugar-free syrup
- Sugar-free jelly

Group 3

If you tolerate the foods in group 2, start slowly adding foods from group 3. Still include foods from group 1 and group 2 in your diet.

Drinks

- Diet clear soda (Sprite Zero[®], diet ginger ale)

Nutritional Supplements

- Carnation Breakfast Essentials with Lactaid[®] milk

Desserts

(Limit to 1 serving per meal or snack)

- Angel food cake
- Banana bread
- Sherbet
- Frozen yogurt
- Italian ice
- Pudding

Fats

(*Limit use)

- Low-fat cream cheese
- Fat-free sour cream
- Peanut butter (creamy)*
- Gravies and sauces*

Other

(*Limit use)

- Cinnamon sugar*
- Brown sugar*
- Honey*
- Jelly*
- Syrup*
- Soy sauce
- Sugar*

If you tolerate group 3 foods, you can slowly reintroduce other foods from your regular diet as long as you do not have symptoms of diarrhea, abdominal pain, cramping, nausea, or heartburn.

Who to Call

If you are a UW Health patient and have more questions, please contact UW Health at one of the phone numbers listed below.

You can also visit our website at

www.uwhealth.org/nutrition.

UW Carbone Cancer Center can be reached at: **(608) 265-1700**.

Nutrition clinics for UW Hospital and Clinics (UWHC) and American Family Children's Hospital (AFCH) can be reached at: **(608) 890-5500**.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright 10/2024 University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#415.