

## Laxative Diet

The [Colorectal Center](#) at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center recommends the following for children seeking a laxative diet.

### Foods that may or may not produce a "laxative" effect:

- **Spicy foods**
- **High fat dairy products:** known to produce laxative effect for some, however may cause constipation for others, trial these foods and if there is no benefit to bowel movements only provide enough dairy to meet calcium needs for age
- **Foods high in fat:** every person's digestive tract is different; for some fatty foods will provoke bowel movements but will constipate others
- **Chocolate:** dark chocolate
- **Caffeine:** known to relax anal sphincter and produce a laxative effect for some patients

## Fiber

There are two kinds of fiber, water soluble and water insoluble. Foods overall high in fiber contain a combination of both. However, some foods contain more of one or the other.

### Soluble:

#### **Pectin (Fruit Pectin) "Sure Jell"**

- Can be found in grocery stores with canning supplies (used for making jam/ jelly)
- Comes in generic
- In general is sour in flavor but some unflavored products are available
- Available in powder and liquid
- Find a food or drink that your child prefers- some examples are yogurt, jello jigglers, orange juice. \*Be sure that as with all other medications that your child eats/ or drinks the



Colorectal Center

entire serving or you will not know the dose that was taken.

- The yellow box of "Sure-Jell" tends to work better in beverages than the pink kind because it doesn't thicken the liquid as much.

## Water Soluble:

- Water soluble fiber prolongs stomach emptying time so that sugar is released and absorbed more slowly. It forms a gel when mixed with liquid which helps to soften stool.
- If your child is taking laxatives water soluble fiber should be included at mealtimes in addition to following an overall high fiber meal plan.

## Foods High in Water Soluble Fiber:

- Cornmeal
- Winter Squash
- Yams
- Artichokes
- Rutabagas
- Papayas
- Orange
- Tangerine
- Potato without skin
- Mango

## Water Insoluble:

- Water insoluble fiber moves bulk through the intestines, promotes regular bowel movements, and helps prevent constipation.

- If your child is not on laxatives and is trying to avoid constipation encourage sources of insoluble fiber.

### Foods High In Water Insoluble Fiber:

▪ Cauliflower	▪ Graham crackers	▪ Bulgar
▪ Spinach, raw	▪ Lima beans	▪ Popcorn
▪ Cabbage, green	▪ Kidney beans	▪ Corn tortillas
▪ Kernal Corn	▪ Strawberries	▪ Whole wheat breads
▪ Broccoli, raw	▪ Blueberries	▪ Whole wheat pastas
▪ Blackberries	▪ Cranberries	▪ Wheat cereals: Raisin Bran, Bran flakes
▪ Carrots	▪ Cherries	▪ Whole wheat pita
▪ Cucumbers	▪ Dates	▪ Barley
▪ Tomatoes	▪ Prunes	▪ Rye bread
▪ Green Peas	▪ Prune juice	▪ Almonds
▪ Baked potato with skin	▪ Raisins	▪ Sesame seeds
▪ Green beans	▪ Melons	▪ Brazil nuts
▪ Split peas	▪ Pears	▪ Chick peas
▪ Guava	▪ Lentils	▪ Fresh pineapple

▪ Kiwi	▪ Grapes	▪ Green/ red peppers
▪ Sweet Potatoes	▪ Raspberries	▪ Mushrooms
▪ Parsnips	▪ Blackberries	▪ Northern Beans

## How much fiber is recommended for your child?

- Initial suggestion: age plus 10, example 4 years + 10 = 14grams/day
- Once child is consuming 1500 calories increase fiber consumption to 25-30grams/day

## Why is Fluid Important?

- Important to drink adequate fluids while increasing fiber in the diet and once goal fiber level is achieved.
- Consuming more fluids can help avoid constipation.
- The amount of fluid recommended for your child depends on child's weight, type of foods consumed and activity level.

## Examples of how to Incorporate Fiber into Mealtimes:

### Breakfast:

- Whole wheat waffles w/fresh fruit (Brands to try: Kashi, or Eggo)
- Cereal choices: oatmeal, Frosted Mini Wheats, Kashi Mighty Bites, Raisin Bran, Wheat Chex, Cracklin Oat Bran, etc.
- Whole wheat bagel, or whole wheat English muffin with chunky peanut butter
- Bran muffins, add dried fruit to increase fiber content
- Add fresh fruit or juice to any breakfast

## Lunch and Dinner:

- Vegetable soup w/whole wheat crackers
- Make a sandwich w/whole wheat bread or pita and add leafy green lettuce and tomato with meat of choice
- Use whole wheat macaroni to make macaroni and cheese and add peas
- Use whole wheat spaghetti; add sautéed zucchini and tomatoes to sauce, serve fresh fruit as a side or salad
- If it's pizza night, make your own, use store bought whole wheat crust, add sauce, small amount of cheese and load up with vegetables for toppings (green, red, yellow or orange peppers, mushrooms, tomatoes, olives, etc)
- Mexican Night; use whole wheat tortillas, add extra vegetables (tomatoes, lettuce, olives, etc), meat of choice, okay to add sour cream or try avocado's for a topping
- Prepare any meat, baked, broiled, grilled, etc; serve with whole wheat starch(brown rice, whole wheat pasta, legumes, beans, etc.) and add a vegetable as a side

## Snack Ideas:

- Cut up green, red, yellow or orange peppers, cucumber slices, split peas, etc and serve with vegetable dip
- Sliced pears, peaches, strawberries, or cubes of cantaloupe with fruit dip
- 5" inch piece of celery, 2tbsp peanut butter, with small box of raisins
- Whole grain crackers, if high fat cheeses function as a laxative food add to snack

## Three Meals Rule: Ask your Dietitian if this rule applies to your child

- Every time food is eaten the body produces a gastric reflex, meaning the colon moves.

- To help train the colon, offer three meals per day: same time, same quantity, similar foods, and no snacks in between.
- Liquids are allowed in between meals only.

## Fiber Supplements:

Name	Active Ingredient	Serving Size	Amount of Fiber
Metamucil Wafers	Psyllium 50% soluble	2 wafers	6 grams
Metamucil Powder	Psyllium 65% soluble	1 tbsp	3 grams
Ground Flax Seed	45% insoluble, 55% soluble	1 tbsp	3 grams
Benefiber	Wheat dextrin, 100% soluble	2 tbsp	3 grams
Citrucil	Methocellulose, 100% soluble	1 scoop or 4 caplets	2 grams
Pectin	100% soluble	1.75 oz. package	4.3 grams

## Sources:

Betty W. Li, Karen W. Andrews, and Pamela R. Pehrsson. **"Individual Sugars, Soluble, and Insoluble Dietary Fiber Contents of 70 High Consumption Foods."** *Journal of Food Composition and Analysis*, 2002, 15, 715-723.

**"Fiber Facts: Soluble Fiber and Heart Disease."** *American Dietetic Association*, 2007.

Farhath Khanum M., Siddalinga Swamy, K.R. Sudarshana Krishna, K. Santhanam, and K.R. Viswanathan. **"Dietary fiber content of commonly fresh and cooked vegetables consumed in India."** *Plant Foods for Human Nutrition* 55: 207-218, September 2000.



## Contact the Colorectal Center at Cincinnati Children's

For more information or to request an appointment for the Colorectal Center at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, please [contact us](#).