

8030 - Nutrition, Digestion and Crohn's Disease



There is no such thing as set Crohn's disease diet because everyone is different with different tolerances, different likes and dislikes, different locations for their disease in the GI tract etc. It is essential that you employ nutritional approaches customized to fit YOU.

There are, however, some general tips that you might find helpful. Especially during a flare up you may want to consider avoiding certain foods that people find harder to digest, such as foods containing insoluble fibre, seeds, nuts, and raw fruits & veggies.

For an Acute Episode:

- Identify trigger foods and eliminate them from your diet
- Identify safe foods that cause the least irritation
- Eat smaller, more frequent meals throughout the day
- Try lactose-free products, as many IBD sufferers appear to be lactose intolerant
- Reduce sugar and artificial sweeteners if they aggravate your gut
- Avoid drinking a lot of fluid during a meal; wait until after eating
- Reduce fat intake as it might be hard to digest

Important Nutrients

You'll want to maintain a diet rich in protein and vitamins, especially vitamins A, D, C, B-12 and folic acid. Also add foods that contain calcium, iron, and zinc. In order to make sure you're including the proper nutrients in your diet, it's best to eat a variety of foods from the four basic food groups:

- Meat and meat substitutes (protein, iron, Vitamin B-12)
- Dairy (calcium, Vitamin D, Vitamin A)
- Cereal and grains (zinc)
- Fruits and vegetables (calcium, Vitamin C, B-12, zinc)

Other Tips:

- Lay off the spicy food as it can cause further irritation
- Alcoholic beverages may worsen symptoms as well by irritating the gastrointestinal tract.
- Wheat is known to be an inflaming grain so you may find reducing wheat intake to be helpful in controlling irritation

Note: Talk to a gastroenterologist or a dietician about developing a healthy diet that is "Crohn's friendly."

Sources:
Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada
www.cfc.ca -- www.livingwithcrohnsdisease.com

