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Patient Hand-out for Diarrhea and Nutrition

Regardless of the cause of diarrhea, follow these helpful tips:

- 1) Drink 8 -12 glasses (8-ounces each) of fluids every day. Diarrhea can make you dehydrated if you don't drink enough. If your urine is dark, you are not drinking enough.
- 2) Sodium and potassium are lost when you have diarrhea. Eat salted crackers, pretzels or broth to replace sodium. Include high potassium foods such as orange juice, potatoes (no skin) and bananas as tolerated. Low carbohydrate electrolyte drinks also help replace electrolytes. Some examples include half strength Gatorade® or Powerade® (equal parts of drink and water), G2® (Gatorade product), Pedialyte® and CeraLyte-70®. Eat small frequent meals.
- 3) Limit high-fiber foods: examples are peas and beans, seeds, whole grains and high-fiber fruits and vegetables or those with thick peels/skins.
- 4) Limit high-fat foods: examples are fried foods, rich desserts (pies, cakes and cookies) and excessive amounts of butter, oil and cream.
- 5) Hot fluid (including soups) may make diarrhea worse. Allow hot fluids to cool to room temperature before eating.
- 6) Avoid alcohol, caffeine and spicy foods which cause food to move more quickly through the intestines.
- 7) For some people, milk and other dairy products make diarrhea worse. You may need to limit or avoid these foods until the diarrhea stops. Cultured milk products such as yogurt, buttermilk and hard cheeses may be better tolerated. Lactose free milk or the use of lactase enzyme supplements (Lactaid®) may be used instead of limiting milk and other dairy products. Suggest avoiding dairy products, fruit juice, alcohol and coffee for at least one week after all symptoms of diarrhea are gone.
- 8) Limit use of sugar-free gums and candies that contain sorbitol or xylitol.

Follow the BRAT (Bananas, Rice, Applesauce and Toast) Diet Once you can eat bananas, rice, applesauce, and toast without experiencing diarrhea, then progress to eating a bland, low fiber diet. Bland, low fiber foods include white chicken meat without skin, scrambled eggs, crackers, white bread and noodles without sauce. You may also try eating canned or cooked fruits without skin.