

## Diarrhoea.

Diarrhoea is when poo is very runny and watery. It is a very common side effect of some medications and cancer treatments or can be caused by the cancer itself. It can also be caused by food poisoning or a food intolerance.

Ask your doctor about anti-diarrhoea medications. There is also support available from the National Continence Helpline on 1800 33 00 66 or [continence.org.au](http://continence.org.au).

Some short-term diet changes may also help diarrhoea. It's important to note that every body is different. If you don't have trouble with a particular food, there is no need to avoid it. A food and symptom diary can help us find patterns.

### Common trigger foods

- High sugar drinks like juice, soft drink and cordial
- Caffeinated drinks like coffee, tea and cola
- Alcohol
- Intense sweeteners found in sugar-free products like “diet” drinks and chewing gum
- High fat foods like deep fried foods or creamy dishes
- Dishes with a lot of chilli
- Dairy
  - » Grainy bread
  - » Bran cereals
  - » Nuts and seeds
  - » Raw fruit and vegetables – *peel and cook until soft to make them easier to digest*



### Temporary lactose intolerance

Lactose is the sugar in milk. Some chemotherapy or radiotherapy to the gut area can affect our ability to digest lactose. This means that people who used to have no problem with milk and milk products find it causes diarrhoea.

This is usually only temporary and after a few months the ability to digest lactose will probably come back. In the meantime try alternatives like lactose-free milk, soy milk, rice milk etc.



### Drink plenty of fluids

Diarrhoea can dehydrate us, so drink plenty of water and other fluids.

Oral rehydration solutions (e.g. Gastrolyte or Hydralyte) can be useful especially if unable to eat.

Severe dehydration requires urgent medical attention. Signs of severe dehydration include a fast heart rate, confusion, irritability or drowsiness.