



Hounslow and Richmond
Community Healthcare



NHS Trust

Women's Health Physiotherapy Service

Bowel Advice

Information for patients

To aid in the management of excessive flatus / wind, and increased bowel urgency.

Central Bookings Offices:

'O' Block Therapy Centre
West Middlesex University
Hospital, Twickenham
Road, Isleworth, TW7 6AF
Tel: 0300 555 0107

Teddington Memorial
Hospital Hampton Road,
Teddington, TW11 OLJ
Tel: 020 87144019
Fax: 020 8714 4138

HRCH website: www.hrch.nhs.uk

Advice for Patients with excessive flatus

Changes to try in your diet if you suffer from excessive wind / flatus:

Reduce caffeine

(found in tea, coffee, fizzy, hot chocolate and energy drinks)
Caffeine has a tendency to increase bowel activity and may increase wind. Try decaffeinated tea and coffee for a week to see if this makes a difference.

Try Herbal Tea

Camomile, peppermint and fennel can result in less wind production for some people.

Alter eating habits

- Eating and drinking at the same time can increase the amount of air that you swallow, so try drinking before or after food, rather than with food.
- Eat a little more slowly to avoid swallowing air with food, and chew each mouthful carefully (especially if food is high in fibre) and avoid talking too much while you are actually eating.
- Eating little and often, rather than one large meal a day can make it easier for your intestines to cope and decrease wind production.
- Regular mealtimes can help as an empty bowel produces more wind and gurgles.

Dietary Changes

Hot spicy food can increase the speed at which food travels along the bowel and increase wind production.

Drinks to avoid

Fizzy carbonated drinks and beer can cause wind for some people.

Products which may be useful to reduce flatus production:

- Peppermint oil
- Rennies and other over the counter indigestion medicines
- Charcoal tablets
- Mint tea
- Fennel tea
- Cardamom seeds (break open the pods and chew the seeds)
- Aloe Vera capsules or juice
- Yakult drink
- Acidophilus capsules (from health food shops)

Advice for Patients with loose stool/increased bowel urgency

Diet

Food affects the consistency of stool and how quickly it passes through the digestive system. If your stools are hard to control because they are watery, you may find that eating high fibre foods adds bulk and makes the stool easier to control. People however, with well-formed stools may find that high fibre foods act as a laxative and contribute to the problem. Other foods that may make the problem worse are drinks containing caffeine, like coffee, tea, and hot chocolate, which relax the internal anal sphincter muscle.

Foods that typically cause diarrhoea, and so should probably be avoided, include:

- Caffeine
- Cured or smoked meat like sausage, ham, or turkey
- Spicy foods
- Alcohol
- Dairy products like milk, cheese, and ice cream
- Fruits like apples, peaches, or pears
- Fatty and greasy foods
- Sweeteners like sorbitol, xylitol, mannitol, and fructose, which are found in diet drinks, sugarless gum and candy, chocolate, and fruit juices
- Carbonated drinks

Eat smaller meals more frequently

In some people, large meals cause bowel contractions that lead to diarrhoea. You can still eat the same amount of food in a day, but space it out by eating several small meals.

Eat and drink at different times

Liquid helps move food through the digestive system. So if you want to slow things down, drink something half an hour before or after meals, but not with meals.

Eat the right amount of fibre

For many people, fibre makes stool soft, formed, and easier to control. Fibre is found in fruits, vegetables, and grains. You will need to eat 20 to 30 grams of fibre a day, but add it to your diet slowly so your body can adjust.

Too much fibre all at once can cause bloating, gas or even diarrhoea. Also, too much insoluble or indigestible fibre can contribute to diarrhoea. So if you find that eating more fibre makes your diarrhoea worse, try cutting back to two servings each of fruits and vegetables and removing skins and seeds from your food.

Eat foods that make stool bulkier

Foods that contain soluble or digestible fibre slow the emptying of the bowels. Examples are banana, rice, tapioca, bread, potatoes, applesauce, cheese, smooth peanut butter, yogurt, pasta, and oatmeal.

Get plenty to drink

You need to drink eight 8-ounce glasses of liquid a day to help prevent dehydration and to keep stool soft and formed. Water is a good choice.

Bowel retraining (alongside anal sphincter strengthening exercises)

- Step 1

Try and delay bowel emptying once sitting on the toilet. (**NB:** sitting on the toilet may excite reflexes associated with bowel emptying so this stage may be the most difficult.) If you only manage a few seconds, don't worry, it will get easier with practice. Keep calm.

- Step 2

Once you are able to delay opening your bowels for 5 minutes, the unpleasant urge will dissipate. Leave the toilet. Return several minutes later, and try and open your bowels.

- Step 3

When able, try to hold on for 5 -10 minutes whilst **in** the bathroom but not sat on the toilet/ or away from the bathroom altogether.

As you have more successes, you will become more confident.

This document can be provided in **different languages and formats**. For more information please contact:
Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)
Email: pals.hrch@nhs.net
Freephone: 0800 953 0363

Arabic

يمكننا مساعدتك إذا لم تكن الإنجليزية لغتك الأولى. إذا كنت ترغب في الحصول على هذا الكتيب بلغة أو صيغة من اختيارك تفضل بالاتصال بفريق PALS والذين سيسعدون بتقديم المساعدة.

Farsi

اگر انگلیسی زبان اول شما نیست میتوانیم به شما کمک کنیم. اگر مایلید این جزوه را به زبان و یا فرمت مورد نظر خود دریافت نمایید، لطفاً با تیم پالز PALS تماس بگیرید و آنها در نهایت خوشوقتی شما را کمک میمایند.

Polish

Możemy Państwu pomóc, jeśli angielski nie jest Państwa językiem ojczystym. Jeśli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać tę ulotkę w wybranym przez Państwa języku lub formie, prosimy skontaktować się z zespołem PALS, który chętnie Państwu pomoże.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਮੁੱਖ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਮਦਦ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਪੁਸਤਿਕਾ ਆਪਣੀ ਮਨਪਸੰਦ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਜਾਂ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ PALS ਟੀਮ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ। ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਮਦਦ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ।

Somali

Anaga waan ku caawinkarnaa hadii Ingiriis owsan aheyn luuqadaadda. Haddii aad ku dooneysit warqadan yari luuqad kale ama siyaaba kale ayaad u dooran kartaa in lagugu habayo fadlan la'xiriir kooxda ee PALS ee aad ugu faraxsan in ay ku cawiyaan.

How are we doing?

We appreciate and encourage comments about any aspect of care or treatment.

Don't hesitate to speak to a member of staff or contact the **Patient Advice & Liaison Service (PALS)** details on previous page.

For a full list of **references** for this leaflet please contact the **service** using details shown on the front page.

Elinks:

The Bladder and Bowel Foundation is a charity providing information and education to both public and health professionals. A continence nurse helpline is available at the number below.

Bladder and Bowel Foundation

SATRA Innovation Park

Rockingham Road

Kettering

Northants NN16 9JH

Email: info@bladderandbowelfoundation.org

Helpline: 0845 345 0165

General Enquiries: 01536 533255