

Managing Diarrhea

For patients at Alvord Brain Tumor Center

What is diarrhea?

When you have bowel movements often and your stools are very loose or runny, it is called *diarrhea*.

What causes diarrhea?

Many things can cause diarrhea. They include:

- Chemotherapy
- Radiation
- Medicines such as antibiotics, or medicines to prevent constipation
- Certain foods
- Emotional stress
- Infections

What should I do if I get diarrhea?

- **Tell your doctor or nurse.**
- Stop taking all bowel medicines. These include Senna, Miralax, Docusate, and others.
- Drink more fluids.
- Do **not** drink milk, coffee, or alcohol.
- Try taking *probiotics*. You can eat yogurt or kefir, or take probiotic pills.
- Avoid foods that can cause diarrhea or make cramping worse. These include fried or



If you get diarrhea, drink plenty of fluids.

greasy food, spicy foods, high-fiber foods, bran and some cereals, raw fruits and vegetables, dried fruits, beans, popcorn, nuts, and chocolate.

- Modify your diet by doing the BRAT diet. These foods can help with intestinal upset and diarrhea:
 - **B:** Bananas
 - **R:** Rice
 - **A:** Applesauce
 - **T:** Toast

Why do I need to report having diarrhea?

Diarrhea can lead to dehydration and loss of electrolytes. It is important to tell your doctor or nurse if you are having diarrhea. If diarrhea is ongoing, we may ask you to provide a stool sample for testing. If your diarrhea is being caused by an infection, your doctor may prescribe an antibiotic.

When to Call

Call your doctor if you have:

- 6 or more loose bowel movements a day, for more than 2 days in a row
- Any blood in your stool or rectal area
- Weight loss caused by diarrhea
- Problems controlling bowel movements
- Cramps in your belly along with diarrhea
- Fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

To talk with a nurse:

Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., call 206.598.2282 and select option #2.

After hours and on weekends and holidays, call our Community Care Line at 206.598.3300.