



Diet and nutrition tips for ISC users

A nutritious diet shouldn't be underestimated. It's not only good for your overall health, but can be good for your bladder too. This includes drinking plenty of water. When you have a bladder condition, it's tempting to drink less, but it's important to remember that water keeps you hydrated and helps flush out any bacteria. 1.5-2 litres (3-4 pints) of a variety of fluid a day is recommended, but your Healthcare Professional will be able to advise if this is right for you. In this factsheet, we give some tips on diet, nutrition and ways to stay hydrated.

Healthy food for your bladder and body

It's important to try and maintain a balanced diet, especially if you have a bladder condition. Eating quality and nutritious food and drinking plenty of water can have many benefits - maintaining a healthy weight, helping to avoid and fight off infection, keeping skin healthy and regulating bladder and bowel function. Here we explain some of the nutrients you need to maintain a balanced diet.



Vitamins and minerals

Good for: Supporting normal body function and preventing disease. Different vitamins and minerals have different roles - some boost your immune system, while others convert food into energy.

How much do you need? At least 5 portions of fruits and vegetables per day is recommended.

Best sources: Fruit and vegetables are best, but they can be found in many types of food. A varied diet should get the amount your body needs. If you're having trouble you could try supplements, but consult your Healthcare Professional for advice first.



Fibre

Good for: Establishing and maintaining regular bowel movements. This may help with constipation.

How much do you need? At least 30g fibre a day is

recommended by the UK National Health Service. As a guide, a portion of peas provides 5g of fibre.

Best sources: Fruit (berries, oranges), vegetables (broccoli, sweetcorn, peas), whole wheat pasta/rice, whole wheat bread, pulses and beans.



Protein

Good for: Building muscle, repairing tissue, fighting illness, carrying nutrients through the body and producing hormones, to name just a few benefits.

How much do you need? The DRI (Dietary Reference Intake) is 0.8g of protein per kilogram of body weight, or 0.36g per pound. This amounts to 56g per day for the average sedentary man or 46g per day for the average sedentary woman.

Best sources: Lean meat, chicken, fish, eggs, dried beans and nuts.



Tips for maintaining a healthy diet

Your general wellbeing may influence how you handle your bladder issues. If you don't feel well, you may also feel this is negatively impacting your bladder. Eating a balanced diet and living a healthy lifestyle can make you feel more energetic and better overall.



How to drink more:

Fill bottles or jugs with water containing a total of 1.5-2 litres of water and store them in the fridge. This will keep the water nice and cool and allow you to track your daily intake - once you've emptied them, you know you've reached your target!



How to balance calories:

If you want to manage your calorie intake, eat sensible portions and try to sit down to a meal at a table. You can also make easy food swaps to healthier alternatives - like switching from full fat to semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, or grilling food instead of frying.



How to increase your intake of healthy foods:

Make half your plate fruits and/or vegetables. A colourful plate is often a healthy plate! For snacking, avoid fatty/salty foods like crisps and opt for healthier alternatives like nuts or popcorn.



How to limit your intake of unhealthy foods:

- Make foods like cakes, biscuits, ice cream, pizza and burgers an occasional treat rather than a regular part of your diet. When you do have them, try to have smaller portions.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks.
- Eating too much salt can raise your blood pressure. Avoid adding salt to meals and instead experiment with herbs and spices to add flavour. Look at food labels and select lower salt options where possible.
- You might find it helpful to consult a nutrition expert who can help create a dietary plan for you - based on your individual medical conditions and food preferences.

How does drinking more help?

When you have bladder issues, you'll probably be worried about drinking too much water in case it causes problems with your condition, like needing to urinate more often or experiencing leaks.

On the contrary, not drinking enough can actually make your symptoms worse. Concentrated urine from dehydration may contribute to bladder irritability, bladder spasms and the growth of bacteria in the urine.

Drinking lots of fluid can help flush out bacteria. Water is the best choice, but fruit juices and herbal teas are good too. Check with your Healthcare Professional first on any fluid restrictions you should follow.

Travel and sport

When you travel or participate in sports, you may be tempted to drink less for fear of leaking urine or needing to catheterise at inappropriate times. But, drinking more fluids is even more important in these situations.

If you travel in hot climates or sweat during physical exercise, you risk becoming dehydrated. Not drinking adequately can also result in constipation, which affects your general health and may affect your bladder health.

If you have a Urinary Tract Infection (UTI)

If you suspect that you might have an UTI, consult your Healthcare Professional as soon as possible. Fluids perform two jobs: they help flush out bacteria from your bladder and they dilute your urine. It's less painful to pass diluted urine than concentrated urine, which is more irritating.

Cut down on the amount of caffeine you drink as this could improve your symptoms. You should have a maximum of 2 cups (250ml each) a day. However, if you decide to cut down, reduce the amount you drink gradually to avoid withdrawal symptoms such as headaches, drowsiness and irritability. Alternatively, you could have decaffeinated versions of these drinks.

Fruit juices such as grapefruit and orange are acidic, so can irritate your bladder. They are best avoided if you have regular UTIs or an overactive bladder.

What about cranberry juice?

You may have heard about the wonders of cranberry. Some people may benefit from drinking cranberry juice or taking cranberry extract tablets, but there is no clear proof of efficacy. Always check with your Healthcare Professional first as cranberry (as well as other supplements) may have an adverse effect with certain medications.

More support

If you did not find all the information that you need in this factsheet, you can contact Coloplast Charter on **0800 783 1434** for advice and support. Alternatively, you can visit www.coloplastcharter.co.uk or discuss your questions and concerns with your healthcare professional.



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