

Tips for Managing Diarrhea



Things you can do on your own

Keep track of your diarrhea.

- Write down how many bowel movements you have each day.

Stay hydrated, and change your diet to lessen your symptoms.

- Drink at least 6-8 cups of clear fluids, such as water, daily to prevent fluid loss.
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, milk, and artificial sweeteners.
- Avoid greasy, fatty, and fried foods.
- Eat small, frequent meals throughout the day instead of 3 big meals.
- Eat foods that help diarrhea like bananas, melon, rice, applesauce, and/or toast.
- Drink sports drinks such as Gatorade to replace your potassium.

Keep the skin around your anus healthy.

- If your skin is getting irritated after bowel movements, gently wipe yourself with baby wipes and then apply barrier creams, such as zinc oxide, Vaseline, or diaper ointments.
- Add 1-2 tablespoons of baking soda to a warm tub of water and soak your bottom.



With over-the-counter medications

Ask your care team if you can take over-the-counter (OTC) constipation medications.

- OTC medications can help with diarrhea. You can buy these at your local drugstore. Take as directed. Examples include Imodium.
- IF YOU ARE TAKING AN IMMUNOTHERAPY DRUG, **DO NOT** TAKE OTC MEDICINES FOR DIARRHEA.



With the help of your care team

Ask your care team about prescription medications and treatments for diarrhea, such as:

- Lomotil (or atropine-diphenoxylate)
- If you have trouble with pills, tincture of opium or DTO may be an option



When to call your care team for help

- If you have a fever of 100.4°F (38°C) or higher along with the diarrhea
- If your stools are watery
- If your diarrhea gets worse, not better, after following these tips
- If you are having signs of fluid loss, including:
 - Feeling weak, dizzy, or like you will pass out
 - Having dark yellow or very little urine
 - Having a dry mouth/being thirsty
- If you are waking up in the middle of the night with diarrhea
- If you have an accident, or lose control of your bowels
- If there is blood in your stool
- If your stools are black in color



For more information and support, visit the American Cancer Society website at [cancer.org/diarrhea](https://www.cancer.org/diarrhea) or call us at **1-800-227-2345**. We're here when you need us.