

**Soft Diet after Colon Resection** (Updated 10.08)

If your doctor has prescribed a soft diet to rest your colon after surgery, please follow these suggestions to speed your recovery. Typically, a soft diet is recommended for the first 2 to 8 weeks following surgery. You will then slowly advance to a regular diet; depending on your progress and tolerance for food. The foods you tolerate can vary greatly from one person to the next. Use the guidelines below to choose a soft diet and adjust it according to your own needs.

**Key Factors**

- Eat small, frequent meals. We recommend eating 6 times per day, or every 2 to 3 hours.
- Eat foods that are easy to swallow and digest. These usually consist of soft, moist foods such as soup, gelatin, pudding, and yogurt. Avoid gummy foods such as bread and tough meats, as well as spicy, fried, or gas-producing foods.
- To prevent swallowing air, which produces excess gas, avoid drinking through a straw and don't chew gum or tobacco. Take small bites, chew your food well, and avoid gulping.
- Avoid any foods that you know cause stomach gas and distention, including corn, beans, peas, lentils, onions, broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage.
- Use a blender to puree foods, such as soup or fruit, to a tolerable consistency.
- To preserve nutrients when cooking foods, steam or microwave vegetables. When boiling potatoes, peel after cooking.

**Eating Guide for a Soft Diet**

A soft diet serves as a transition from liquids to a regular diet. It generally eliminates foods that are difficult to chew or swallow and also spicy, fried, or gas-producing foods.

**To ease digestion, the following foods are generally eliminated:**

- Tough meats.
- Raw fruits and vegetables.
- Chewy or crispy breads.
- Nuts and seeds.
- Fried, greasy foods.
- Spicy foods.
- High fiber foods like whole grain breads and cereals.

Food Group	Recommended Foods	Foods to Avoid
Beverages	Milk Decaf tea Powdered drink mixes Non-citrus juices	Chocolate drinks Caffeinated drinks Decaf coffee Carbonated drinks Alcohol Citrus juices
Grains	Ready to eat cereal Refined bread Crackers Plain white rice Pasta Pancakes and waffles	Whole-grain breads and cereals Anything with seeds, nuts, raisins, dried fruit, coconut Whole grain rice Sweet rolls, coffee cake, donuts Seasoned crackers Popcorn
Meats and beans	Tender meat, pork, poultry, and fish (baked, broiled, boiled, roasted, stewed, or simmered) Eggs Tofu Smooth peanut butter	Anything fried Tough meats with gristle Smoked meats Sausage Shellfish Fatty meats Cold cuts/lunch meat Fried eggs Dried beans Nuts and seeds Crunchy peanut butter
Dairy	Low-fat milk products Smooth yogurt Mild cheese Cottage cheese	Sharp/strong cheeses Dairy with nuts or seeds Cheese with peppers
Vegetables	Soft-cooked or canned vegetables Fresh lettuce and tomato Potatoes without the skin Peeled white or sweet potatoes (boiled, mashed, baked or creamed)	Raw vegetables, tomatoes, tomato sauce Gas-producing vegetables: broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, onions, cauliflower, corn, green peppers, cucumber, radishes, sauerkraut Dried beans, peas, and lentils Fried potatoes or potato chips
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Food Group	Recommended Foods	Foods to Avoid
Fruit	Soft raw fruits (without skin) Cooked and canned fruits Fruit juice	Dried fruits Fruits with skins, seeds or pits, such as berries, figs or raisins All citrus fruits and juices Ripe bananas Coconut
Fats and Sweets	Ice cream, sherbet, and frozen yogurt Pudding Cake and cookies without hard pieces Sugar, syrup, honey, jelly, seedless jam Molasses Marshmallows Butter and margarine Mayonnaise and vegetable oils Mildly seasoned salad dressings, sauces, and gravies Plain cream cheese and sour cream	Spicy salad dressings Bacon, bacon fat, ham fat, lard, salt pork Fried foods Nuts Anything with dried fruit, nuts, coconut, candied fruit Peanut brittle