

Chinese Medicine and IBS/Ulcerative Colitis/Crohn's/Chronic Diarrhea

Conventional/Western Diet

The conventional diet for Irritable Bowel Syndrome focuses on fiber. Studies are not conclusive regarding the effects of fiber on IBS, but here's the general consensus: Eat foods (and supplements) high in soluble fiber. Soluble fiber soothes your digestive tract and normalizes bowel function, preventing both diarrhea and constipation.

Examples:

- Oats, oat bran and barley
- Broccoli, Brussel sprouts, carrots
- Apples, pears, prunes, peaches
- Beans and lentils (just about all types)
- Chick peas and black-eyed peas
- Fruits such as oranges and apples
- Vegetables such as carrots
- Psyllium husk

Insoluble fiber helps constipation by adding bulk to your stools but, with IBS, you need to pay attention to your reaction. They may initiate an overreaction of the "gastrocolic reflex" (that causes those abdominal spasms). Foods high in insoluble fiber include:

- Vegetables such as green beans and dark green leafy vegetables
- Fruit skins and root vegetable skins
- Whole-wheat products
- Wheat oat
- Corn bran
- Seeds & Nuts

Many foods have **both** soluble and insoluble fibers. Generally, fruits have more soluble fiber and vegetables more insoluble fiber.

- Eat regular meals in **small** amounts.
- Avoid (or minimize):
 - Red meat
 - Oily, greasy, fried foods
 - Dairy
 - Chocolate
 - Coffee
 - Alcohol
 - Carbonated drinks
 - Honey
 - Spinach
 - Sesame seeds
 - Apricots
 - Plums (with the exception of umeboshi plums)

Chinese Dietary Principles

Eat a diet of:

- Fresh, lightly cooked vegetables (a big variety) - not raw. This should be the largest part of your diet.
- Whole grains (but avoid wheat). Eat more vegetables than grains
- Beans
- Eat small amounts of animal protein (2 or 3 oz. per day). Think of it as a flavoring for your meals, rather than the main course.
- Drink room temperature or warm water

Limit everything else to only small amounts.

Some doctors recommend large amounts of fruit for health, however, eating lots of fruit can weaken the digestion / elimination for many people, due to its sweetness.

Foods should be **natural**, not processed, and **organic** whenever possible

Foods that help treat diarrhea: Rice broth, barley broth, blackberry juice, string beans, button mushrooms, sweet potatoes/yams, sweet rice, adzuki beans, garlic, leeks, crab apples, olives, umeboshi plums

Foods that are especially helpful in treating chronic diarrhea: carrots, buckwheat

Foods that help treat diarrhea from too much cold (watery stools; copious, clear urine): red pepper, black pepper, cayenne pepper, cinnamon bark, Chinese ginseng, Korean ginseng, dried ginger, nutmeg, chestnut, chicken eggs

Foods that help treat diarrhea from too much heat (burning sensation with bowel movement): millet congee, tofu, mung beans, pineapples, persimmons, raspberry leaf herbal tea, marjoram herbal tea, peppermint herbal tea, nettle leaf herbal tea

Additional recommendations

- Eat cooked and warm foods, not raw or straight out of the fridge
- Avoid "sweet" tasting food
- Avoid cold foods and drinks (unless you have cold type diarrhea)
- Eat very little greasy or oily food
- Avoid alcohol
- Avoid dairy
- Avoid caffeine
- Avoid yeast
- Avoid boxed, packaged and processed foods
- Drink about a teacup of warm water with meals. Green tea is o.k. if your stools are not dry, but avoid tea if you have dry stools (tea is a diuretic - it dries you out.)
- Moderate use of spices like ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg and pepper are ordinarily beneficial, but in excess they create too much "heat" in your intestines, which you want to avoid when you have inflamed intestines or dry stools.
- Asafoetida, coriander and mint are good for people with IBS
- Coconut is believed to be a good addition to the diet's of people with Crohn's
- Ajowan, cardamom, coriander, and nutmeg are believed to be a good addition for people with chronic diarrhea
- Add foods that are high in soluble fiber

Avoid:

- Eating late at night
- Eating in a hurry
- Overeating
- Eating while stressed