

# Diarrhea Management

Diarrhea is a common problem experienced by many patients and can be caused by chemotherapy, radiation, surgery, stress, or antibiotics. Please do not be afraid or embarrassed to call your doctor or nurse at any time, if left untreated the diarrhea may get worse and not improve on its own.

## When to report your diarrhea

- Fever 100.5° or higher with diarrhea.
- If you are still have diarrhea 24 hours after starting Imodium AD

## Over the counter medication management of diarrhea:

- For mild diarrhea you can use **Pepto-Bismol**, as directed on the package
- For moderate to severe diarrhea use **Imodium AD** (maximum of 8 caplets per day)
  - 1<sup>st</sup> dose: Take 2 caplets (4mg)
  - During the day: Take 1 caplet (2mg) every 2 hours after each loose stool
  - During the night: Take 2 caplets (4mg) at bedtime and every 4 hours as needed
  - If you are on the chemotherapy drug Irinotecan, you must continue taking the Imodium AD until you are free from diarrhea for 12 hours.

## Drink plenty of fluids

- Drink 8 to 10 large glasses of liquids a day to replace those lost by diarrhea. Drink small quantities at a time slowly.
  - **Water** should only be part of the 8 to 10 glasses a day; it does not replace lost minerals
  - **Jello** is a good source of fluids
  - **Gatorade** replaces lost salt and potassium
  - **Clear soup** or **broth** replaces lost salt
  - **AVOID** caffeinated, very hot, or very cold drinks

## Eat small meals often

- A good choice of foods for diarrhea is the BRAT diet:
  - **B**- bananas- help replace lost nutrients
  - **R**- rice- easily digested and binding because it is a starch
  - **A**- apple sauce- provides sugars for energy
  - **T**- toast- easy to tolerate and binding because it is a starch
- When these foods are being well tolerated, then you can add other bland low fiber foods such as:
  - Foods easy to digest: chicken- white meat without the skin, steamed rice, crackers, white bread, pasta noodles without sauce, and canned or cooked fruits without skins
  - Foods high in potassium: bananas, apricots without skin, peach nectar, potatoes without skin, broccoli, halibut, mushrooms, asparagus, non-fat milk
- Foods that can make diarrhea and cramping worse:
  - Fatty, fried, greasy, or spicy foods can cause more problems and discomfort
  - High-fiber foods: bran, whole grain cereals, dried fruit, fruit skins, popcorn, nuts and vegetables
  - Foods that cause gas: Beer, beans, cabbage, carbonated drinks