

Dietary Advice Information Sheet

Updated 3 July 2010

[http://www.ulcerativecolitis.org.uk/
informationsheets](http://www.ulcerativecolitis.org.uk/information sheets)

There is fairly high confidence that there is little connection between poor diet and Ulcerative Colitis/Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). This should not be confused with Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) - caused almost entirely by a poor diet high in processed foods and low in dietary fibre.

In spite of this diet has a large part to play in minimizing the effects of Ulcerative Colitis - and in the treatment of flare-ups. Care must be taken though with Colitis - as a good diet for a person with colitis differs slightly from that of a person without colitis. In addition to the information below there is a wealth of peoples own experiences in the diet and lifestyle area of the Colitis UK forum - <http://www.ulcerativecolitis.org.uk/colitisforum>.

Fibre - and Ulcerative Colitis

There is much confusion in the advice given to people about dietary fibre and ulcerative colitis. To understand this properly it is important to appreciate there are two distinct types of fibre. One - soluble fibre should be encouraged when suffering from colitis - the other - insoluble fibre tends to inflame colitis and should be avoided.

Soluble Fibre - Beneficial for Colitis

Soluble fibre is very helpful for colitis and differs from insoluble fibre in that it is broken down/digested in the large intestine/colon. This produces a soft stool and good motions - but does not produce the type of particles that adhere to the bowel wall and cause inflammation. Good examples of soluble fibre include

The body of fruits - e.g. peeled apples, peeled pears
Peeled Vegetables - e.g. peeled potatoes and carrots
Oat bran - e.g. porridge/Ready Brek
White rice

Insoluble Fibre - Detrimental for Colitis

Insoluble fibre is generally bad for ulcerative colitis/IBD sufferers. This is the type of fibre that most people would associate with a high fibre diet. Examples of this type of fibre include -

Wheat bran/wholemeal bread/bran flakes etc.
Cabbage/Broccoli /Sweet corn
Skins peel of vegetables such as apples and grapes

This type of fibre passes through the whole of the digestive tract without being digested - and hence has a tendency to adhere to the wall of the colon when it is inflamed. This irritates the colon - and hence will aggravate any colitis. As a rough guide if you can see particles/undigested matter in the stool this is insoluble fibre.

Fish Oils

Fish oils - especially from oily fish such as sardines and sild have been shown to have a beneficial effect on colitis. This is because they help to reduce inflammation generally - and they also have a topical effect on the bowel as they pass through. Oily fish such as sardines and sild or fish oil capsules can be used.

Dairy products

Avoid excessive amounts of dairy products such as cheese/cream etc. This doesn't mean that they have to be avoided totally - just some common sense used.

Foods to Avoid when you have a flare up

There are a number of foods which are best avoided during a flare up (i.e. blood or mucous in the stools). These are mainly foods that either include a high amount of insoluble fibre - or very high amounts of dairy fats-

Cabbage/sprouts/Cauliflower/Broccoli
Sweet Corn/Mushrooms
High Bran fibre/wholemeal bread/high fibre cereal
Onions - especially raw
Cheese/cream