

# Diarrhoea

## NET Tip Sheet

Diarrhoea is usually associated with frequent, watery bowel motions. Some causes of diarrhoea with NETs include: excessive hormone production, bowel surgery, somatostatin analogues (SSAs), chemotherapy and radiation therapy. However every person is different.<sup>(1, 2)</sup>

Contact a doctor as soon as possible if your bowel motions are pale, yellow, sticky, oily, floating or hard to flush. If you have 1 or 2 of these symptoms, you may be experiencing steatorrhea (fat malabsorption).

### Lifestyle Advice

- Keep a food and symptom diary to identify trigger foods.
- Stress and anxiety can cause or worsen diarrhoea, try some stress relieving exercises such as deep breathing and mindfulness to help you relax.
- Eat smaller and more frequent meals.
- Ensure that you stay hydrated, drink enough so that your urine is pale in colour.
- Seek medical advice if you have: sudden onset of persistent diarrhoea (more than 6-8 times per day) without a change in your treatment, blood in your bowel motions associated with a fever, abdominal pain or nausea and vomiting. This may indicate an infection.
- Once diarrhoea has stopped, slowly return to your normal diet.

### Food and Drinks that are well tolerated<sup>(3, 4, 5)</sup>



- Banana.
- White rice, white bread and white pasta, mashed potato, crackers and toast
- Cooked egg, skinless chicken and lean white fish.
- Electrolyte replacement drinks can be helpful to maintain hydration as you lose important salts, minerals and water in diarrhoea.
- Psyllium husk can relieve diarrhoea.

### Food and Drinks that can worsen Diarrhoea<sup>(3, 4, 5)</sup>



- Alcohol.
- Caffeine containing drinks such as tea, coffee, chocolate, cola and energy drinks can worsen diarrhoea due to stimulation of the bowel.
- Hot and spicy foods.
- Skins, pips, pith and seeds from fruit and vegetables.
- High fat foods such as fish and chips, burgers and other fast foods.

***This tip sheet is just a guide, for more personalised information contact a dietitian.***

#### References

1. Bossi et al., *Diarrhoea in adult cancer patients: ESMO Clinical Practice Guidelines*, Annals of Oncology, 2018
2. Whyand T, Bouvier C, and Davies P, *Prevalence of self reported side effects in neuroendocrine tumour patients prescribed somatostatin analogues*, Br J Nurs, 2018
3. Whyand T, Davies P, and Caplin, *Food and Neuroendocrine Tumours*, The NET Unit, Royal Free London Foundation Trust 2014
4. Leyden, *Neuroendocrine Tumours: A guide for patients and carers*, Unicorn Foundation Australia 2015
5. Schnaid C, Kennedy E, *Nutrition and Neuroendocrine Tumours*, Unicorn Foundation Australia, 2017