

If you have any questions, please ask your physician or nurse.

Colonoscopy Low-Residue Diet

A low-residue diet is designed to reduce the residue from food that remains in your bowels after you eat. You should follow the low-residue diet for a short time before your colonoscopy to make sure your bowels are clean and empty. This allows the physician to see as much of your bowel as possible during the colonoscopy.

Foods to avoid while on this diet include:

- All fruits and vegetables
- Legumes, seeds and nuts
- Juices with pulp
- Milk and milk products (no more than 2 cups per day).

Start the low-residue diet 3 days before your procedure.

Please follow your colonoscopy instructions about when you should start your clear liquid diet.

Low-residue diet

Food Group	Foods Recommended	Foods to Avoid
Meat, poultry, fish and protein substitutes	Beef (tender or ground) Chicken or turkey (tender or ground) Eggs, Egg Beaters® Fish, seafood, shellfish, tuna Lamb (tender or ground) Fresh lean pork (tender or ground) Tofu	Meat that is tough or stringy
Grains	Only foods made with refined white flour such as white bread, bagels, English muffins, white dinner rolls, pancakes, and white, refined flour pasta Pita bread Cold cereals (corn flakes, Rice Krispies®, Special K®) White rice Tortillas (corn or flour)	Oatmeal Cream of wheat Muffins Bran Nuts, seeds Whole grains

Low-residue diet

Food Group	Foods Recommended	Foods to Avoid
Dairy (no more than 2 cups per day)	Milk, buttermilk or lactose-free milk Soy, rice or almond milk Regular, soy, or lactose-free yogurt without, nuts, fruit, granola or chocolate mix-ins Kefir Mild cheese, cottage cheese, lactose- free cottage cheese	Products with seeds or nuts If lactose-intolerant, avoid milk and foods made with milk Yogurt with added fruit, nuts, granola or chocolate mix-ins
Fats	Bacon Butter, margarine Vegetable oil, salad dressing, mayonnaise Cream or plain gravy Whipped cream, cream Creamy peanut butter and all nut butters	Nuts, seeds Coconut Olives
Other	Saltines, melba toast, pretzels White potatoes (without the skins) Sherbet, gelatin Sugar, plain hard candy Condiments Coffee, tea Carbonated beverages	All fruits, raisins All vegetables (except white potatoes without the skins) Legumes, beans Juices with pulp

Northwestern Medicine – Health Information Resources

For more information, contact Northwestern Memorial Hospital’s Alberto Culver Health Learning Center (HLC) at hlc@nm.org, or by calling 312.926.5465. Health information professionals can help you find the information you need and provide you with personal support at no charge.

For more information about Northwestern Medicine, please visit our website at nm.org.

Para asistencia en español, por favor llamar al Departamento de Representantes para Pacientes al 312.926.3112.

The entities that come together as Northwestern Medicine are committed to representing the communities we serve, fostering a culture of inclusion, delivering culturally competent care, providing access to treatment and programs in a nondiscriminatory manner and eliminating healthcare disparities. For questions, please call either Northwestern Memorial Hospital’s Patient Representatives Department at 312.926.3112, TDD/TTY 312.926.6363 or the Northwestern Medical Group Patient Representatives Department at 312.695.1100, TDD/TTY 312.926.6363.

Developed by: NMH Digestive Health Center and Nutrition Services