What Is a Bland Diet?

A bland diet consists of foods that are least likely to irritate the gastrointestinal tract.

Why Should I Follow a Bland Diet?

This diet may be recommended if you are suffering from:

- Peptic ulcer
- Chronic gastritis
- Reflux disease
- Dyspepsia
- Other stomach irritation

While this diet can’t cure these conditions, it can help manage their symptoms. In general, high-fat, spicy, fried, and acidic foods, and caffeinated and alcoholic beverages are the most likely to cause distress.

Food Choices on a Bland Diet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Category</th>
<th>Foods Recommended</th>
<th>Foods to Avoid*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grains</td>
<td>Any (eg, pasta, rice, bulgur) (Note: prepared without fat)</td>
<td>Grains prepared with fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>Any (Note: prepared without fat)</td>
<td>Vegetables prepared with fat (eg, French fries, mashed potatoes made with butter or cream), tomato juice, tomato sauce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>Any (except citrus) (Note: prepared without fat)</td>
<td>Citrus fruits and juices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>Low-fat or nonfat milk, soy milk, buttermilk, powdered milk, low-fat or nonfat yogurt, low-fat or nonfat cheese, low-fat or nonfat ice cream, sherbet</td>
<td>Whole and 2% milk products, cream, regular cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meats and Beans</td>
<td>Lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, soy, dried beans, nuts, and nut butters (Note: prepared without added fat)</td>
<td>Fried meats, bacon, sausage, pepperoni, salami, bologna, hot dogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snacks, Sweets, and Condiments</td>
<td>All unless listed</td>
<td>Pepper, chili powder, ketchup, mustard, vinegar, rich desserts (eg, cakes and pastries), doughnuts, chocolate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beverages</td>
<td>Water, nonfat or low-fat milk, juice, caffeine-free soda, and herbal tea</td>
<td>Peppermint or spearmint teas, decaffeinated or regular coffee and tea, decaffeinated soda or energy drinks, chocolate milk, hot cocoa, alcoholic beverages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fats and Oils</td>
<td>Less than 8 teaspoons per day</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
These are foods, beverages, spices, and condiments that commonly irritate the stomach. However, there may be foods on this list that don’t bother you. Likewise, there may be foods not on this list that do bother you. (For example, some individuals with GERD (gastroesophageal reflux disease) complain that high-acid fruits, such as oranges and tomatoes bother them). Therefore, it’s important to monitor the foods you consume and how well you tolerate them.

Suggestions

- Eat small, frequent meals (eg, six small meals instead of three large meals).
- Eat slowly; try putting utensils down between bites.
- Avoid lying down for 3-4 hours after eating.
- Keep a food log to try and pinpoint the foods that bother you.
- Talk a registered dietitian about an individualized meal plan.

RESOURCES:

American Dietetic Association  
http://www.eatright.org/

American Gastroenterological Association  
http://www.gastro.org/

CANADIAN RESOURCES:

Dietitians of Canada  
http://www.dietitians.ca/

Health Canada  
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/index-eng.php/

REFERENCES:


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