PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Minimal-Fat Diet

This information explains how to follow a minimal-fat diet.

On a minimal-fat diet, you limit how much total fat you eat. There is no range of fat for this diet. The goal is to get your daily fat intake as close to 0 grams as possible.

Your doctor may prescribe this diet if your lymphatic system (the tissues and organs in your body that help fight infections) is leaking fluid. The leaked fluid can build up in your abdomen (belly) or chest. If you eat less fat, your lymphatic system will make less fluid and the leak may heal.

Use this resource to help you choose the best foods to eat while you're on this diet. Also, be sure to check the nutrition labels on packaged foods so that you know how much fat is in your food.

Your healthcare provider will tell you when to go back to your regular diet.

Key Points of a Minimal-Fat Diet

- Eat only foods with 0 grams of fat.
- Don’t use any fat to prepare food, such as butter, margarine, or oil.
- Use Teflon® nonstick pans to stop foods from sticking when you cook.
- Use fat-free condiments (such as ketchup and mustard), spices, herbs, garlic, and onions to flavor your food.

What to Eat on a Minimal-Fat Diet

Food Group	Eat	Do Not Eat
Dairy	• Skim (fat-free) milk • Fat-free cultured or frozen yogurts • Fat-free cottage cheese • Other fat-free dairy products such as fat-free cheeses and fat-free ice cream	• Low-fat or whole-fat: ◦ Milk ◦ Yogurts ◦ Puddings ◦ Cheeses
Drinks	• Coffee (black or with fat-free half and half or skim milk) • Tea with lemon or skim milk	• Creamers • Coconut milk • Smoothies containing dairy products

	• Soda • Juices • Fruit punch • Fat-free hot chocolate with skim milk or water	with fat (such as yogurt, ice cream, or milk) • Fruit beverages that should be avoided (see “Do Not Eat” under “Fruits”) • Non-dairy milk alternatives, such as almond milk, soy milk, cashew milk, and oat milk
Breads, Cereals, and Grains	• Hot or cold cereals • Plain pasta • White rice • Rice noodles • Fat-free white bread • Fat-free varieties of Vita Muffins® and Vita Tops® • Fat-free rolls • Matzos • Zwieback® crackers	• Any items with nuts, seeds, or coconut • Doughnuts • Croissants • Pastries • Pies • Whole-grain products • Brown rice

	• Fat-free crackers • Angel food cake • Fat-free cookies • Fat-free cakes	

Fruits	• Except for those fruits listed under “Do Not Eat”, you can have all other fruits in these forms:
	  ◦ Fresh
	  ◦ Frozen
	  ◦ Jarred
	  ◦ Canned
	  ◦ Dried
	• Jellies
	• Jams
	• Juices
		• Coconut
		• Cherimoya
		• Dried figs
		• Papaws
		• Sapodillas
		• Sapotes
		• Avocado
		• Any fruit with toppings containing fat such as whipped cream

Vegetables	• Except for those vegetables listed under “Do Not Eat”, you may have all others in these forms:
	  ◦ Fresh
	  ◦ Frozen
	  ◦ Jarred
	  ◦ Canned
	  ◦ Juiced
		• Any vegetables with:
		  ◦ Butter
		  ◦ Oil
		  ◦ Margarine
		  ◦ Sauces that contain fat
		• Olives
		• Chickpeas (garbanzo beans)

	• Boca Original Vegan Burger® and other fat-free veggie burgers • Air-popped popcorn • Fat-free kidney beans, black beans, and pink beans	• Soybeans • Avocados • Jarred vegetables in oil
Meats and Other Proteins	• Up to 6 ounces a day of fat-free turkey breast or other packaged deli meats labeled fat-free • Egg whites • Fat-free varieties of Eggbeaters®	• All others
Fish	• None	• All
Fat	• Fat-free butter-type spreads (such as Promise® and “I Can’t Believe It’s Not Butter®”) limited to 2 servings a day • Medium-chain triglyceride oil (sold in pharmacies or health food stores) ◦ As a salad dressing with	• Butter • Margarine • All oils except for medium-chain triglyceride oil • Cooking oil sprays • Regular salad dressings

	vinegar or lemon juice ◦ Mixed in fruit such as applesauce ◦ To sauté food at low heat (not deep fry)	
Soups	• Fat-free broth • Health Valley® fat-free soups	• All others
Liquid Nutritional Supplements	• Boost Breeze® (Nestlé) • Carnation Breakfast Essentials®, powdered vanilla or strawberry mixed with skim milk • Ensure Clear™ (Abbott)	• Carnation Breakfast Essentials® ready-to-drink or powdered chocolate • All others containing fat
Condiments/Other	• Ketchup • Fat-free mustard • Fat-free mayonnaise • Fat-free salsa • Louisiana “Original” Hot Sauce™ • Soy sauce • Vinegar • Pickles	• Regular or low-fat mayonnaise • Nuts • Seeds • Olives • Peanut butter • Any items with added fat

	• Pickle relish • Plain horseradish • Sauerkraut • Fat-free salad dressings • Molly McButter®, limited to 2 teaspoons a day • Fat-free pasta sauce • Marshmallows	

Buying Nutritional Supplements

You can buy nutritional supplements at your local market or drug store. You can also order them online for home delivery.

Here is a list of companies you can order nutritional supplements from:

Abbott Nutrition
800-258-7677
www.abbottstore.com

Carnation
800-289-7313
www.carnationbreakfastessentials.com

Nestlé
800-422-ASK2 (800-422-2752)

Sample Menus

Double Milk

Double Milk has twice the amount of calories and protein of skim milk. To make the Double Milk in the sample menus:

1. Combine 1 quart of skim milk with 1 envelope of nonfat, dry milk powder.
2. Blend well and refrigerate.

Menu 1

Breakfast

- Farina with skim or Double Milk
- Boost Breeze® or Ensure Clear™ beverage
- Dry toast with jelly
- Coffee with fat-free half and half or skim milk

Lunch

- Fat-free black beans over white rice, topped with fat-free salsa and fat-free Greek yogurt
- Carnation Breakfast Essentials® powder with skim milk or Double Milk
- Fresh pineapple

Dinner

- Mixed green salad with fat-free dressing
- Fat-free spaghetti with fat-free tomato sauce
- Green beans prepared in fat-free broth
- Toasted fat-free bread with garlic powder
- Fruit juice
- Fat-free frozen yogurt over angel food cake with maple syrup

Snack

- Fat-free pretzels
- Double Milk with fat-free chocolate syrup

Menu 2

Breakfast

- Eggbeaters® with fat-free salsa or ketchup
- BlueBran VitaMuffin™ with strawberry jam
- Fresh orange
- Tea with lemon and honey

Lunch

- Fat-free cottage cheese with fruit

- Zwieback with apricot jam
- Strawberry Carnation Breakfast Essentials® powder with skim milk or Double Milk

Dinner

- Fat-free veggie burger with ketchup and mustard
- Baked sweet potato with marshmallows
- Homemade coleslaw (shredded cabbage, carrots, onions, fat-free mayonnaise, and vinegar)
- Fat-free ice cream with fat-free chocolate syrup
- Fruit juice

Snack

- Fat-free yogurt

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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