

Elimination Diet for Incontinence

Sometimes, not being able to control bowel actions (incontinence) can be caused by something as simple as a food you are eating. Some people can be affected by more than one food. To find out which food(s) are causing your bowel problems, try removing different types of foods from your diet, one at a time. The following is a list to get you started.

1) **Milk Products (milk, ice cream, cheese; yogurt is okay)**

Some people are sensitive to, or may even have an allergy to milk products. This can bother the bowels, and cause them to move faster than normal. Try getting rid of milk from your diet to see if this helps. Lactose is a type of sugar found in milk products and some people cannot digest it; this is also known as lactose intolerance. Others may be allergic to, or cannot digest the milk protein casein.

2) **Caffeine (coffee, black tea, soda) and Chocolate (candy)**

Some people are sensitive to caffeine, which can be found in coffee, tea, cola, and chocolate. Caffeine excites the bowels and causes stool (waste) to move faster. Even a small amount (like in chocolate) can be enough to excite the bowels. Slowly cut back on caffeine; stopping it suddenly can make you moody and may cause headaches.

3) **Spicy Foods (hot wings, barbeque sauce, chili peppers, jalapeños)**

Spicy foods can also speed up the time it takes foods to move through your bowels.

4) Alcohol (beer, wine)

Alcohol may cause stool (waste) to be soft and loose. Different types of alcohol can affect people in different ways.

5) Artificial Sweeteners (sucralose , saccharin, aspartame)

Artificial sweeteners are man-made sugars that cannot be taken in by your body. For some people, these can act as a laxative by making their stools loose and/or promoting bowel action. Take out artificial sweeteners from your diet to see if this helps.

6) Sugars (mannitol, sorbitol, fructose)

These sugars in excess amounts also act as a laxative and can cause severe diarrhea and loose stools.

7) Olestra

Olestra is a man-made fat alternative that is found in some fat-free foods. It cannot be taken up by your body, so it goes through the digestive system and is never used. For some people, it can make their stools loose and watery.

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