

What is a bland diet?

A **bland diet** includes foods that are soft, low in fiber, and gentle on the digestive system. The bland diet is also commonly known as a **soft diet, low residue diet, or gastrointestinal soft diet**. The goal of this diet is to let your gut rest.

- Bland diets include foods that are soft, not very spicy, and lower in fiber. Foods with fiber in them are harder to digest. You should not drink alcohol or drinks with caffeine in them while on a bland diet. Your provider may refer you to a **dietitian** (an expert on nutrition and healthy eating) to help you plan a healthy diet.
- A bland diet can be used with other lifestyle changes to help treat ulcers, heartburn, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and gas. You only follow a bland diet for a short period of time. You may also need a bland diet for 4-6 weeks after stomach or gastrointestinal (GI) surgery.

What foods should I eat on a bland diet?

Focus on eating a variety of foods listed below:

- ✓ Low-fat or fat-free milk, Greek yogurt, kefir, and cottage cheese (if you are lactose intolerant, buy lactose-free products) or plant-based alternatives like almond milk and almond yogurt
- ✓ Cooked, canned, or frozen vegetables
- ✓ Fruits like bananas, honeydew melon, cantaloupe, or canned fruits in natural juices such as peaches, pears, or unsweetened applesauce
- ✓ 100% fruit juices and vegetable juices (some people, especially those with acid reflux, may want to avoid citrus juice like orange juice)
- ✓ Bread, pita, crackers, and pasta made with refined white flour

- ✓ White rice and grits
- ✓ Peeled sweet potatoes and peeled potatoes
- ✓ Cold and hot cereals such as Cheerios®, Kix®, Corn or Rice Chex®, Rice Krispies®, Cream of Wheat®, or Cream of Rice®
- ✓ Lean (low-fat) tender meats, such as chicken, ground turkey (that is more than 90% lean), fish, and shellfish that are steamed, baked, or grilled with little or no added fat
- ✓ Creamy peanut butter and almond butter or PB2® low-fat peanut butter powder
- ✓ Pudding and custard
- ✓ Eggs or egg whites
- ✓ Tofu
- ✓ Plain hummus
- ✓ Soup (especially broth-based soups)
- ✓ Weak caffeine-free tea
- ✓ Small amounts of healthy fats like 1 tablespoon olive oil or canola oil, or 1/8 (or 2-3 slices) of an avocado

What foods should I not eat on a bland diet?

- ✗ High or full-fat dairy foods, such as whipped cream, ice cream, or large amounts of sour cream
- ✗ Strong cheeses, such as bleu cheese or Roquefort cheese
- ✗ Raw vegetables or vegetables that cause gas, such as broccoli, onion, cabbage, cauliflower, cucumber, green peppers, or corn.
- ✗ Fruits with lots of seeds (such as berries or figs)
- ✗ Dried fruits
- ✗ Whole-grain or bran cereals
- ✗ Whole-grain or whole-wheat bread, crackers, or pasta
- ✗ Pickles, sauerkraut, or similar pickled foods

- × Spices, such as hot pepper and garlic
- × Foods with a lot of sugar in them, like candy or soda
- × Seeds and nuts
- × Highly seasoned, cured, or smoked meats and fish
- × Fried foods
- × Alcoholic drinks
- × Drinks with caffeine in them, like coffee or energy drinks

Other tips for a bland diet:

- Eat small meals. Eat more often during the day.
- Chew your food slowly and well.
- If you smoke, stop smoking cigarettes.
- Avoid medicine that contains aspirin or ibuprofen (like Advil® or Motrin®). These can be very upsetting to the stomach.
- Do not eat within 2 hours of your bedtime.
- Drink fluids slowly.
- Oral supplements like BOOST® Simply Complete™, homemade shakes and smoothies, and protein powders may be useful to help meet your nutrient needs.
- If you are still experiencing GI symptoms on a bland diet, try keeping a food and symptom journal and ask to meet with a registered dietitian.

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