Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Diet During Neutropenia

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Diet during Neutropenia

Patient Information

Dietetic & Nutrition Department

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Dietary guidelines during Neutropenia

When you are neutropenic (low white blood cells) your body is less able to resist infections. You must take extra care over the food that you eat in order to reduce the risk of eating some harmful bacteria.

Cleanliness and hygiene are important, and you must also avoid foods, which are known to have naturally high levels of bacteria.

Here are some guidelines to help ensure that only suitable foods are eaten. If you have any further questions, ask your nurse to contact the dietitian for you.

General Advice

Shopping

- Avoid buying food with damaged or broken packaging
- Buy chilled or frozen foods last and get them home as quickly as possible
- Always check use by and best before dates on packaging
- Avoid shops where raw and cooked meats are stored in the same fridge

Storage

- The fridge should be kept between 0º c and 5º c
- The freezer should be kept below -18º c
- Store cooked food at the top of the fridge
- Raw or defrosting meat or fish should be kept at the bottom of the fridge
- Do not overload the fridge or freezer as this will lead to the temperature dropping
- Eggs should be stored in the fridge
- Use and store food as per manufacturer’s instructions
- Never refreeze thawed food

Food Preparation

- Hands should always be washed with warm water and soap before preparing food
- Hands should be washed after going to the toilet, sneezing, after touching pets, hair, dirty washing, ready-made or raw food
- Do not use a tea towel to dry hands, keep a separate towel or use kitchen paper
- Cover any cuts or grazes with a waterproof plaster
- Keep pets away from work surfaces, food and your dishes
- Ensure any cloths or sponges are regularly changed

- Avoid cross contamination of food by changing or washing chopping boards and utensils between raw and cooked foods
- Disinfect work surfaces regularly
- Wash can tops before opening them
- Wash fruit and vegetables before eating

Cooking

- Thaw meat and poultry in a fridge and not at room temperature as bacteria grow quickly at room temperature
- Cook all food thoroughly and ensure it is piping hot all the way through
- Meat should be cooked until juices run clear
- Pre heat the oven to ensure food is cooked at the recommended temperature
- Always follow manufacturers guidelines and do not shorten cooking times
- Do not reheat cooked foods
- Microwaves can be used for defrosting and heating prepared foods following manufacturer’s instructions
- Do not put hot food in to the fridge
- Cool food to room temperature within an hour after cooking and then chill or freeze

Eating out

- Ensure food is piping hot when served and cooked all the way through

- Choose freshly prepared foods from reputable outlets. Avoid salad bars, street vendors, market stalls and ice cream vans

	Foods allowed	Foods to Avoid

Starchy Foods	All types of bread, rolls, muffins, bagels, sweet rolls Potato chips, corn chips, popcorn Cooked and ready to eat cereals Cooked grains e.g. rice and pasta Cooked white or sweet potato, chips etc All types of bread, rolls, muffins, bagels, sweet rolls Potato chips, corn chips, popcorn Cooked and ready to eat cereals Cooked grains e.g. rice and pasta Cooked white or sweet potato, chips etc	Bread and rolls with raw nuts Cereals containing raw nuts Raw oats Uncooked pasta, pasta salad or potato salad with raw vegetables or eggs

Meat, Fish and Poultry	Meat, fish and Poultry which is thoroughly cooked Tinned food is safe	Raw meat and raw fish such as sushi, meat paste or pate Rare or medium cooked meat, fish or poultry Cold cuts from delicatessens
Dairy Products	Pasteurised milk Sour cream Milkshakes using individual cartons of ice cream and milk Commercial frozen milkshakes Refrigerated and frozen pasteurised whipped cream	Unpasteurised milk or yoghurt Milkshakes made with non-commercial ice cream or made in a blender Yoghurt or ice cream from a machine. Yoghurt and yoghurt products made with live and active cultures

Cheese	Processed cheese. Cheese made from pasteurised milk e.g. cheddar, edam, cream cheese, cottage cheese, cheese spread	Cheese made from unpasteurised milk e.g. camembert, brie, blue veined cheese
Eggs	Always cook eggs thoroughly (the yolk should be hard)	Partially cooked eggs. Foods with raw eggs e.g. mousses or fresh mayonnaise
Soup	Hot soup, tinned soup and homemade soup	Cold soup made of stock from meat, fish or poultry
Vegetables and salads	Vegetables should be thoroughly washed and well cooked All vegetables should be peeled	Raw vegetables e.g. peppers etc and fresh salads Bruised vegetables
Fruit	Canned fruit and juices. Pasteurised juices/smoothies Thick skinned fruits e.g. apples, banana, oranges Frozen fruits	Unwashed raw fruit Unpasteurised fruit juices

Beverages	Instant and brewed decaffeinated or regular coffee and tea Individual cans or bottles of carbonated beverages Brewed herbal teas Canned, bottles, powdered beverages and sports drinks	Any others such as cold brewed tea
Water	Cool boiled tap water or carbonated water	Bottled still mineral or spring water, water from coolers/fountains
General	Baked products with nuts as ingredients, roasted nuts	All uncooked herbs and spices Raw nuts

Contact Information

Dietetic Department, Royal Albert Edward Infirmary 01942 822189



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