



NUTRITION TIPS FOR NEUROGENIC BOWEL

What is Neurogenic Bowel?

Neurogenic bowel is when communication between the brain and the spinal cord nerves that control bowel function is disrupted in people with neurological conditions such as spinal cord injury, spina bifida, or multiple sclerosis.

What Role Does Nutrition Play?

Nutrition plays an important role in managing neurogenic bowel. Making dietary changes has the potential to:

- Shorten your bowel program
- Reduce abdominal pain and bloating
- Regulate bowel movements
- Improve stool consistency to prevent bowel accidents
- Improve quality of life



Fiber for Neurogenic Bowel

Soluble vs Insoluble Fiber

Soluble Fiber:

- Helps with *constipation* and *diarrhea* by adding bulk to dry/hard stools and loose/runny stools
- Food Sources:
 - Oats and oatmeal
 - Chia seeds
 - Legumes (beans, lentils, peas)
 - Oranges, grapefruit
 - Broccoli
 - Avocado
 - Sweet Potato
 - Apples, pears, applesauce
 - Bananas
 - Berries
 - Psyllium / Metamucil

Insoluble Fiber:

- Helps with *constipation* by absorbing water into your stool, which softens it
- Food Sources:
 - Ground flax seeds (flaxmeal)
 - Nuts and seeds
 - Cauliflower
 - Green beans
 - Leafy greens
 - Fruits and vegetables with skin
 - Whole grains
 - Wheat bran
 - Brown rice

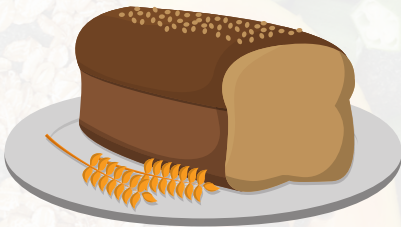
Fiber for Neurogenic Bowel

How Much Fiber Should I Have?

Aim for **25-40g** of fiber each day. It is recommended that women aim for 25g and men aim for 38g per day.

Tips for Increasing Fiber Intake

- Add 1-2 tbsp flaxmeal or chia seeds to yogurt, smoothies, oatmeal, cereal
- Switch to whole grain pasta, bread, crackers, and brown rice
- Bake with whole wheat flour
- Add oats, psyllium, or flaxmeal to muffins, cookies, banana bread, or energy bites
- Include a fruit or vegetable at most meals and snacks
- Add spinach to smoothies, lasagna, soups, chili, and stir-fries
- Keep the skins on fruit, sweet potatoes and potatoes



Note: Start with small amounts of fiber per day, and slowly build up to prevent abdominal discomfort. If you have diarrhea or other digestive symptoms from too much fiber then reduce your fiber intake and please consult with your healthcare practitioner.

Fibre Content of Certain Foods

- Pear with skin = 5g
- ½ cup all bran buds = 17g
- 1 cup lentils = 16g
- 1 cup spinach = 4g
- ½ avocado = 7g

Fluids for Neurogenic Bowel

Fluids help food (especially fiber) move through your digestive tract and add bulk to stool.

How Much Fluid Should I Drink?

The general recommendation is **2-3 liters per day** (8-12 cups or 64oz) but it also depends on factors such as activity levels and climate. Spread your fluid intake evenly throughout the day.

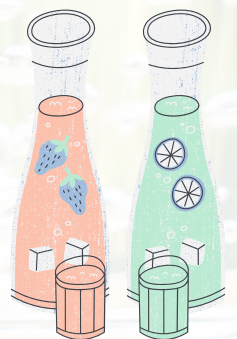
What Counts as Fluid?

- Water
- Flavored seltzer
- Tea
- Milk or nondairy substitutes
- Coffee *
- Juice



Tips for Increasing Fluid Intake

- Add frozen or fresh fruit, vegetables, or herbs to your water to enhance the taste
- Keep a water bottle with you throughout the day
- Take sips of water while eating meals and snacks



This information does not constitute medical advice for any individual. As specific cases may vary from the general information presented here, we advise readers to consult a qualified health care professional on an individual basis.

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