

## **Managing Diarrhea**

Diarrhea is characterized by unusually loose or liquid stools, occurring three or more times per day. When this happens, food and fluids pass too quickly through the digestive system, and nutrients are not absorbed properly. The most important treatment for diarrhea is to replace lost liquid, salts, and electrolytes to prevent dehydration. You may also benefit from a probiotic supplement to replete some of the healthy bacteria in your gut. Talk to your doctor about whether this is appropriate for you.

### **Tips for Managing Diarrhea:**

- Drink at least one cup of liquid after each episode of diarrhea to prevent dehydration, and eat salty crackers, such as saltines throughout the day. Aim for a total daily fluid intake of at least eight eight-ounce glasses.
- Avoid gastric stimulants such as caffeine, greasy or oily foods, milk and other dairy products, fruit juices, spicy foods, alcohol, and sugar alcohols (xylitol, sorbitol). Additionally, the high fiber content of raw fruits and vegetables may be difficult to tolerate; eat cooked vegetables instead.
- Add “BRAT” foods to the diet: bananas, rice, applesauce, and toast, and eat other simple foods such as oatmeal and soups.
- Ground psyllium works to absorb excess fluid in the intestines and may be beneficial in the form of a supplement.
- Eat soups that contain rice and lean proteins. The rice aids in binding stool, the soup broth provides electrolytes and fluid repletion, and chicken or tofu, for example, provide easily digestible proteins.
- Keep bananas in the freezer to use as a base for smoothies or to blend into a creamy frozen treat. Bananas contain electrolytes and are binding.