

# Tips for Managing Diarrhea

## Things you can do on your own



### Keep track of your diarrhea:

- Write down how many bowel movements you have each day

### Stay hydrated and change your diet to lessen your symptoms:

- Drink at least 6-8 cups of clear liquids, such as water, daily to prevent dehydration
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, milk, and artificial sweeteners
- Avoid greasy, fatty, and fried foods
- Eat small, frequent meals throughout the day instead of 3 big meals
- Eat foods that help diarrhea like bananas, melon, rice, applesauce, and/or toast
- Drink sports drinks such as Gatorade to replenish your potassium

### Keep the skin around your anus healthy:

- If your skin is getting irritated after bowel movements, gently wipe yourself with baby wipes and then apply barrier creams, such as zinc oxide, Vaseline®, or diaper ointments
- Add 1-2 tablespoons of baking soda to a warm tub of water and soak your bottom

See the Other Resources page for more information

## With over-the-counter medications



- IF YOU ARE TAKING an IMMUNOTHERAPY DRUG (i.e., Keytruda/pembrolizumab, Opdivo/nivolumab, Libtayo/cemiplimab, Tecentriq/atezolizumab, Bavencio/avelumab, Imfinzi/durvalumab or Yervoy/ipilimumab), **DO NOT TAKE OVER THE COUNTER MEDICATIONS** for diarrhea.
- Several treatments for diarrhea, such as Imodium, are available over the counter at your local pharmacy. Please use these medicines as directed.

**REMINDER - Always keep your care team updated about over-the-counter medicines you are taking. If your care team tells you they are not safe for you, do not take them.**

## With the help of your care team



If over-the-counter medications are not helping, your care team may give you a prescription medicine, such as:

- Lomotil (or atropine-diphenoxylate)
- If you have trouble with pills, tincture of opium or “DTO” may be an option

## When to call your care team for help



- If you have a fever  $\geq 100.5^{\circ}\text{F}$  ( $38^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) along with the diarrhea
- If your stools are watery
- If your diarrhea gets worse, not better, after following these tips
- If you are having signs of dehydration. Signs of dehydration include:
  - Feeling weak, dizzy, or lightheaded
  - Having dark yellow or very little urine
  - Having a dry mouth/being thirsty
- If you are waking up in the middle of the night with diarrhea
- If you have an accident, or lose control of your bowels
- If there is blood in your stool
- If your stools are black in color, as this can sometimes be a sign of internal bleeding

## Additional information on Diarrhea



- [Click here](#) for more information on managing diarrhea
- [Click here](#) for how cancer can affect diarrhea