



Niki's Top Strategies to Stop Typical Chronic Diarrhea

1. Determine if you have lactose intolerance. Lactose is milk sugar found in dairy products. Lactose intolerance can be diagnosed with a lactose challenge or a hydrogen breath test.
2. Determine if you have fructose intolerance. Fructose is a type of sugar found in fruit, honey, and high-fructose corn syrup. The best test for diagnosing fructose malabsorption is a hydrogen breath test.
3. Maximize intake of soluble fiber (e.g. oatmeal), while limiting insoluble fiber (e.g. vegetable skins such as potato).
4. Avoid sugar-free gum, candy, and medications that contain the sugar alcohols sorbitol, mannitol, or xylitol.
5. Cut back or eliminate anything that contains caffeine, including coffee, tea, soda, chocolate, energy drinks, or diet pills. Caffeine makes everything in the intestine move through faster.
6. Limit intake of acidic, spicy, or high-fat foods, which can aggravate diarrhea.
7. Limit intake of alcohol-containing beverages. Alcohol stimulates the bowel and causes gas.
8. Manage your stress through exercise, prayer, yoga, meditation, massage, acupuncture, biofeedback, or hypnotherapy.
9. Take a probiotic (e.g. Align® or VSL#3®) as directed on the package for at least three to six months.
10. Discuss your medications with your physician or pharmacist to determine if any have diarrhea as the main side effect.
11. Try taking loperamide (Imodium®) as directed on the box.
12. Avoid bulk-forming fiber supplements such as Metamucil® or Citrucel®, which often exacerbate diarrhea.
13. Discuss with your doctor whether or not you need additional calcium or iron supplements. Both are constipating.
14. Consider medical evaluation for food allergies, bile-acid diarrhea, or small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO).
15. Get tested for celiac disease (CD), a digestive disorder that damages the small intestine and interferes with absorption of nutrients from food. Treatment for CD requires a lifelong gluten-free diet. Gluten is found in wheat, rye, and barley.
16. If you have irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO) or celiac disease (CD), you may benefit from a low-FODMAP diet. FODMAPs are fermentable carbohydrates which can cause gas, bloating, diarrhea, and even constipation in susceptible individuals.