Nutrition and Neuroendocrine Tumours (NETs): Bowel blockage or narrowed bowel

Nutrition and dietetics Patient information

Bowel blockage or narrowed bowel

A small bowel NET, or surgery to the bowel or tummy, can sometimes lead to the bowel becoming narrowed or blocked. You may experience symptoms, including:

- Tummy pain
- Bloated or swollen tummy
- Feeling sick and/or being sick
- Not being able to poo or finding it very difficult to poo
- Watery poo

Blockages and symptoms cannot always be prevented, but your risk may be less with these tips:

- Chew your food well
- Drink plenty of fluids - at least 8 cups a day
- Regular movement or exercise
- Change the texture of your diet - see below for more information

No symptoms to mild symptoms

You should follow a low fibre diet if:

- you have previously experienced some of the symptoms above and have been told this was due to a bowel blockage or narrowed bowel.
- you have been told you are at risk of bowel blockage or narrowed bowel.

A low fibre diet makes the poo less bulky so it can move through the bowel more easily. The table below gives an idea of what to eat for a low fibre diet. If your symptoms get worse, please see the next section of this information sheet.

Category	Foods to Avoid	Alternative foods to eat
Fruit	• Fruits with skins, seeds or pips • All berries • Citrus fruits • Dried fruit (including raisins, sultanas, prunes, apricots, figs, dates) • Pineapple • Grapes • Rhubarb • Kiwi	• Tinned fruit (peaches, pears) • Peeled and stewed fruit except rhubarb • A small handful of melon, mango, banana, and peeled apple, pear, nectarine, plum • Fruit juices without pulp or bits
Vegetables	• Vegetables with skin, seeds, pips • Spinach, kale, cabbage, sprouts, broccoli • Peas, sweetcorn, celery, asparagus, mushrooms, leeks • Soups with vegetable pieces • Large amounts of salad items including tomato (whole), lettuce, peppers, avocado, cucumber	All vegetables should be well cooked and peeled: • Carrots, parsnips, all squash, turnip, swede • Potato • Small amounts of onion and garlic · • Clear vegetable broth • Tomato sauce without seeds/skin e.g. passata • Small amounts of avocado, lettuce and cucumber (peeled) • Peeled and deseeded peppers • Cauliflower or broccoli without stalks
Carbohydrates	• Wholegrain/ multigrain/granary/seeded/ rye bread/rolls/wraps • Wholemeal/brown pasta • Brown/wild rice • Bran cereals • Cereals containing nuts or dried fruit e.g. granola, muesli • Potatoes with skins • Wholegrain crackers or crispbreads	• White bread/rolls/wraps (NOTE some people may need to avoid all bread products if they cause symptoms) • White pasta or noodles • White rice • Polenta • Semolina • Cornflakes, rice krispies • Small portions of ready brek or rolled oats/porridge • Cream crackers, plain scones, crumpets, croissants • Potatoes without skins • Plain pastry, pancake, Yorkshire pudding
Protein	• All beans, lentils, chickpeas • Nuts or nut butters • Soya mince	• All meat and fish (including breaded) • Eggs • Silken tofu • Quorn® • Smooth hummus • Smooth nut butter
Dairy or dairy alternatives	• Yoghurt/cheese/ice cream with fruit pieces or nut	• Cheese • Milk • Yoghurt (smooth) • Ice cream • Custard/Rice pudding • Butter/Margarine • Cream

Category	Foods to Avoid	Alternative foods to eat
Nuts, Seeds and Snacks	• Whole nuts • All seeds • Cakes or biscuits with nuts/seeds/ dried fruit • Popcorn • Cereal bar	• Smooth nut butters • Potato crisps • Breadsticks/plain pretzels • Plain poppadums • Smooth dips e.g. sour cream, taramasalata • Rice cakes • Cakes/biscuits without nuts/seeds/ dried fruit • Boiled/jelly sweets, dark/milk/white plain chocolate, fudge, toffee
Drinks	• Fruit juice with pulp/bits • Prune juice	• Tea/coffee • Squash • Fizzy drinks • Smooth fruit juice • Oxo, Bovril • Hot chocolate or malt drinks
Miscellaneous	• Marmalade • Chutneys • Jam with seeds • Wholegrain mustard, pickles, relish, coleslaw • Stalks and leaves of herbs	• Marmite • Chocolate spread • Sugar, honey, syrup • Smooth jam, lemon curd or marmalade • Oils, smooth salad dressings, ketchup, gravy, smooth mustard soy sauce, pepper, salt, mayonnaise, Worcester sauce • Herbs and spices if powdered or dried • Onion and garlic powder/granules

Severe symptoms

If you have symptoms that are severe, it is recommended to follow a liquid diet until your symptoms improve. This may include very bad pain, being sick and lots of bloating or a very swollen tummy. This involves only having fluids and no food. It can include nutritious fluids such as milk, juice and prescribed nutritional supplement drinks.

You should contact your NET nurse or dietitian or if outside working hours call NHS **111**. If your symptoms are very bad, then you should go to hospital.

After your symptoms have gone, gradually build up your diet to a general low fibre diet as shown in the table above. Contact your dietitian or nurse as you will likely need support with this. They can make sure you are having the right texture foods and having a balanced diet. If at any point you start to get symptoms, go back to a liquid diet until your symptoms get better again. If your symptoms are not improving contact your dietitian, nurse or doctor.

Longer term considerations

If you need to follow these dietary changes for a long period of time and are finding it difficult or you are losing weight, speak to your dietitian or nurse.

If you are only eating a small range of foods, consider buying a multivitamin and mineral supplement. Choose one labelled ‘A-Z’. If you feel you need other nutritional supplements, speak to your dietitian or nurse for advice.

Contact details

Ruth Lee
Neuroendocrine oncology dietitian
Wessex NET group
Tel: **07887 832343**
Email: **ruth.lee4@nhs.net**

Macmillan Cancer Support
www.macmillan.org.uk
or **0808 8080000**
National cancer charity

Neuroendocrine Cancer UK
www.neuroendocrinecancer.org.uk
National charity for NET patients

PLANETS cancer charity
www.planetscharity.org
Local Wessex charity for NET patients

NHS
University Hospitals Dorset
NHS Foundation Trust

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Poole Hospital, Longfleet Road, Poole, Dorset, BH15 2JB

Author: **Ruth Lee** Date: **October 2026** Version: **Two** Review date: **October 2029** Ref: **125/22**

t: 01202 665511 w: www.uhd.nhs.uk : @UHDTrust : @uhd_nhs

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