



Elimination Diet

Sometimes, bowel incontinence can be caused by something as simple as a food you are eating. Start by taking out one food source at a time. This way, you can determine which one may be the culprit causing your bowel leakage problems.

Sometimes, more than one food may affect you.

- 1) Spicy foods (hot wings, barbeque sauce, chili peppers, jalapeños)
 - Spicy foods can speed up the pace at which foods move through your bowels.
- 2) Milk Products (milk, ice cream, cheese. Yogurt is okay)
 - Some people are sensitive to, or may even have an allergy to milk products. This can irritate the bowels, and cause the bowels to move faster. Try eliminating milk from your diet to see if this helps. Some people may be intolerant to the lactose in milk, and others may be allergic to, or can't digest the milk protein (caseine).
- 3) Caffeine (coffee, black tea, caffeinated pop, chocolate)
 - Some people are sensitive to caffeine, which can be found in coffee, tea, cola, and chocolate. Caffeine stimulates the bowel causing the stool to move faster. Gradually cut back on caffeine, stopping it suddenly can make you irritable and may cause headaches.
- 4) Alcohol (beer, wine)
 - Alcohol may cause bowel movements to be soft and loose. Different types of alcohol can affect people in different ways.
- 5) Chocolate (candy)
 - Chocolate can contain caffeine. Even a small amount can be enough to contribute to bowel stimulation.
- 6) Artificial Sweeteners
 - Artificial sweeteners are sugars that cannot be absorbed by your body. For some people, it can make their stools loose or even act as a laxative. Try eliminating artificial sweeteners from your diet to see if this helps.
- 7) Sugars (mannitol, sorbitol)
 - These sugars in excess amounts act as a laxative and can cause severe diarrhea and loose stools.
- 8) Olestra
 - Olestra, a man-made fat alternative, is found in some fat free foods and is not absorbed by your body. For some people it can make their stools loose and watery.

Information provided by the Michigan Bowel Control Program (MBCP)