

# Discharge Instructions: Eating a Low-Copper Diet



Your healthcare provider has prescribed a low-copper diet for you. Most people who are asked to follow a low-copper diet have Wilson disease, which causes the level of copper in your blood and urine to be too high. If you are being treated for Wilson disease, you may be able to eat some of the foods listed below in moderation. But check with your healthcare provider first and take other suggested treatments to help your body get rid of copper. In some cases, zinc supplements may help your body not absorb copper from your diet.

Foods with a high amount of copper include chocolate, organ meats, mushrooms, shellfish, whole-grain products, wheat bran products, seeds, and nuts. Discuss your specific nutrition plan with a dietitian or your healthcare provider. If you eat a vegetarian or vegan diet, talk with your healthcare team. Many vegetarian and vegan protein sources are high in copper.

## General guidelines

- Have your home tap water checked to be sure that it doesn't have high levels of copper. If the pipes to your home are copper, be sure to run water through them before using the water for cooking or drinking. Copper can leach into the water as it sits in pipes.
- Don't cook with copper-lined bowls, pots, pans, or cooking utensils.
- Read food labels. Note the copper content if it's available.

## Making food choices

- Choose breads, rolls, cereals, and pastas made from refined flour, and white rice. Don't have wheat germ, bran cereals, or bran breads.
- Eat vegetables, but avoid vegetable juice cocktails, mushrooms, and potatoes with skin. Canned sweet potatoes are OK but not fresh sweet potatoes.
- Don't have beans, including peas, lentils, and lima, garbanzo, pinto, red, black, or soybeans.
- Don't eat tofu.
- Don't eat commercially dried fruit, fruit leathers, raisins, or prunes.
- Don't eat avocados.
- Limit mangos, papayas, pineapple, kiwi, and pears.
- Don't eat foods that contain chocolate or cocoa.
- Don't eat nuts, peanut butter, or other nut butters.
- Don't drink any soy or chocolate drinks, instant breakfast drinks, or meal replacement drinks or bars.
- You may drink milk and eat dairy products that don't contain soy or chocolate. Choose milk, yogurt, cheese (including cream cheese and cottage cheese), custard, eggs, or coconut milk.
- Eat small portions of animal protein. Don't have pork, lamb, dark-meat turkey or chicken, or organ meats such as liver. Don't have shellfish.
- Don't drink alcohol. It can be harmful to your liver.
- Talk with your healthcare provider before taking a multivitamin. People who are or plan to become pregnant should talk with their healthcare provider before taking a prenatal vitamin, because they

contain copper.

## Follow-up

Follow up with your healthcare provider as advised.

## When to call your healthcare provider

Call your healthcare provider right away if you have any of the following:

- Nausea, vomiting, and loss of appetite
- Yellowing of the skin and eyes
- Dark urine
- Bloody, black stools or unusually light-colored stools
- Vomiting blood
- Abdominal swelling
- Itching that doesn't go away
- Swollen feet or legs
- Red palms
- Trouble sleeping
- Confusion

© 2000-2027 The StayWell Company, LLC. All rights reserved. This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Always follow your healthcare professional's instructions  
This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Always follow your Healthcare professional's instructions. Copyright Krames LLC.