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**BRAT diet** 9/20/17 fg

The **BRAT diet** is a diet for patients with gastrointestinal distress such as [diarrhea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diarrhea), [dyspepsia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dyspepsia), or [gastroenteritis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gastroenteritis). The BRAT diet consists of foods that are bland and low in [fiber](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dietary_fiber). Foods high in fiber cause gas

and possibly worsen gastrointestinal upset.

BRAT is an  [acronym](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acronym) for [bananas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banana), [rice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rice), [apple sauce](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apple_sauce) and [toast](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Toast), the staples of the diet. Extensions to the BRAT diet include BRATT (with [tea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tea)), BRATTY (with tea and [yogurt](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yogurt)), and BRATCH (with [chicken](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicken), often boiled). Sometimes the "T" represents tapioca.

In addition to dietary restrictions, all patients, regardless of age, should take enough fluids to prevent dehydration, along with oral rehydration solutions to replace the depleted [electrolytes](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electrolyte) to avoid salt imbalance. Severe, untreated salt imbalance can result in extreme weakness, confusion, coma, or death.

The American Academy of Pediatrics states that most children should continue a normal, age appropriate diet. The foods from the BRAT diet may be added, but should not replace normal, tolerated foods. Sugary drinks and carbonated beverages should be avoided. Cultured foods, [rice water](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rice_water), coconut water and soluble fiber foods are more effective at treating ongoing diarrhea in conjunction with tolerated foods and beverages. Apple sauce provides [pectin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pectin), as does toast with grape jelly.

A well-balanced diet is not always best during diarrhea. The intestinal mucosal cells are damaged in common viral enteritis, and are not able to properly absorb nutrients until they regenerate, which requires about 48 hours. Many clinicians feel that restricting food intake during this time, especially difficult to digest substrates such as fats and proteins, helps to shorten the duration of the diarrhea (and nausea and vomiting). Thus the usual recommendation for clear liquids, especially those that replace the salts lost in diarrhea and vomiting. If sugars are restricted, the body's natural mechanism is to break down muscle tissue to generate glucose, as fat cannot be broken down into glucose. Once the nausea has resolved, and hunger returns, the BRAT diet can supply carbohydrates which are easier to metabolize by the weakened intestine than are fats and proteins. The BRAT diet can also serve as a test diet, since if symptoms return or worsen that is a sign that the diet was advanced too soon. Incorporating foods from the BRAT diet may reduce the severity of diarrhea.

The BRAT diet is not nutritionally complete and may be deficient in energy, fat, protein, fiber, vitamin A, vitamin B12, and calcium. Food restriction does not benefit diarrhea and may actually cause individuals to suffer from diarrhea for longer periods of time.

Medical attention is required when on the BRAT diet if there is any blood or mucus present in the diarrhea, if the diarrhea is severe or if it lasts longer than 3 days.

First aid treatment for gastroenteritis is to briefly limit the diet to bland, easy-to-digest foods and plenty of liquids (including oral rehydration therapy, ex oral pediatric electrolyte solutions, WHO Rehydration Solution, or half Gatorade-half water).