

Neutropenia and Diet

A guide for inpatients, relatives, and carers

① For more information, please contact:

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Introduction

Neutropenia means that the number of neutrophils (a type of white cell) in the blood is at a low level. Neutropenia can occur because of illness or because of medical treatment, such as chemotherapy.

Neutropenia increases the risk of foodborne infection. If you have neutropenia this information will help to reduce the risk of foodborne infection whilst you are in hospital.

- Clean your hands thoroughly before eating. Ward staff serving meals should do the same before serving you.
- All hot main meals and desserts on the hospital menu that are served freshly by the ward are suitable.
- You should be served your hot food at the start of the meal service to ensure that it is as hot as possible.
- Check all other foods and drinks served by the ward **and** brought in by visitors against the table below.

Food safety guidance

Milk and Dairy

Foods and drinks to avoid:

- Unpasteurised milk and dairy products.
- Probiotic or 'bio' yoghurts and probiotic drinks.
- Soft cheese made with unpasteurised milk, mould-ripened cheese, or blue veined cheese, e.g., feta, Brie, goat's cheese, Stilton.

Suitable alternatives:

- Any pasteurised milk, UHT milk, soya milk, cream and desserts made with pasteurised cream.
- Any yoghurt that does not describe itself as 'probiotic' or 'bio'. Live yoghurt is allowed.
- Vacuum packed pasteurised and hard cheeses, e.g., Cheddar and Edam, processed cheeses, e.g., cheese triangles, pasteurised cream cheese.

Egg

Foods and drinks to avoid:

- Raw or undercooked eggs and foods containing them, that are not British Lion stamped. e.g., homemade mayonnaise or mousse.

Suitable alternatives:

- Fully cooked British Lion eggs (eggs with a lion stamp on them).
- Supermarket brands: mousse and mayonnaise, which will use British Lion eggs.
- Eggs that are not British Lion, as long as the whites and yolks are cooked thoroughly until solid.

Meat, fish, and alternatives

Foods and drinks to avoid:

- Raw/undercooked meat, poultry, or fish, e.g., meat that is still pink.
- Sushi
- Smoked meats and fish, e.g., salami, smoked salmon.
- Non-vacuum-packed meat and fish e.g., from delicatessen counter.
- Meat or vegetable pâté.
- Raw or lightly cooked shellfish.

Suitable alternatives

- Well-cooked and tinned meat, poultry, and fish.
- Vacuum packed cooked cold meats and non-smoked fish eaten immediately once packet opened.
- Pasteurised pâté and paste in a jar.
- Cooked fish and seafood.
- Cooked shellfish, such as mussels, lobster, crab, prawns, scallops, and clams from reputable seller and well cooked.

Fruits and vegetables**Foods and drinks to avoid**

- Raw unpeeled fruit or vegetables including salad.
- Damaged or overripe fruit and vegetables.
- Raw dried fruit and foods containing them, e.g., muesli.
- Unpasteurised or freshly squeezed fruit or vegetable juice or smoothies.

Suitable alternatives

- Peeled or well-cooked fruit and vegetables.
- Tinned fruit.
- Cooked dried fruit, e.g., in fruitcake or cereal bars.
- Pasteurised smoothies (including those made on ward 31), UHT or long-life fruit juices, e.g., in cartons, fruit cordials.

Other**Foods and drinks to avoid**

- Fresh nuts including in shells.
- Uncooked herbs, spices, and pepper.
- Unpasteurised or 'farm fresh' honey and honeycomb.
- Unnecessarily large packets of food, items from pick and mix, universal/shared jars, or delicatessen counter foods, e.g., olives.
- Bottled mineral or spring water.
- Water from coolers or water fountains.

Suitable alternatives

- Cooked nuts, nuts in cans, peanut butter, roasted nuts.
- Cooked herbs, spices, and pepper.
- Pasteurised/filtered/heat-treated honey (ideally individual portions).
- Ideally packets should be for personal use only, e.g., butter, sweets, pickles, small packets of food.
- Freshly run tap water, preferably from tap with built-in filter.
- (Note – Wards 17, 31 and High Dependency Unit have taps with built-in water filter).

Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact: Admin Team, The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York YO31 8HE, telephone 01904 725269 or email yhs-tr.yorkdietitians@nhs.net

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email yhs-tr.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net

An answer phone is available out of hours.

Teaching, training, and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training, and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Leaflets in alternative languages or formats

If you would like this information in a different format, including braille or easy read, or translated into a different language, please speak to a member of staff in the ward or department providing your care.

Patient Information Leaflets can be accessed via the Trust's Patient Information Leaflet website: www.yorkhospitals.nhs.uk/your-visit/patient-information-leaflets/

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