



Patient & Family Guide  
2017

# Low Copper Diet for Wilson Disease



[www.nshealth.ca](http://www.nshealth.ca)

# Low Copper Diet for Wilson Disease

If you have Wilson disease, your liver is not able to use copper normally. Without treatment, harmful levels of copper can build up in your body. This can affect your liver, brain, kidneys, and eyes.

Wilson disease is treated with medications and a diet with no more than 1.5 mg of copper per day.

Avoid foods with a high copper content for at least your first year of treatment.

**Important:**

**If you have Wilson disease, never eat any of the following organ meats as they are too high in copper:**

- › Liver
- › Heart
- › Kidney
- › Brain

1. Check the copper content of your home's drinking water. Well water or water that comes into the house through copper pipes may have high levels of copper. Drinking water should have no more than 0.1 ppm copper or 100 mcg per litre. In general, city water supplies do not need to be checked. If you have copper pipes, flush the pipes before using water for cooking or drinking. This will help to get rid of any standing water with copper in it. A water purifying system may help if copper content is high. Consider using bottled water that does not have copper.
2. Do not use pots, pans, utensils, or cookware made of copper. Do not store food or drinks in containers that are made of copper.
3. Avoid vitamin and mineral supplements that have copper. Avoid mineral water.
4. Avoid alcohol. It is not high in copper, but it is harmful to your liver.
5. If you are being treated with a chelating agent, ask your doctor about taking a vitamin B6 supplement of 25 to 50 mg per day. Have your vitamin B6 and iron levels checked at 6 months, 12 months, and then yearly.

## **Avoid these high copper foods for at least your first year of treatment:**

- Lobster
- Shrimp
- Scallops
- Crab
- Oysters
- Clams
- Mussels
- Octopus
- Squid
- Lamb
- Quail
- Duck

Once you have finished your first year of treatment, ask your doctor if you need to keep avoiding these foods.

**Do not eat more than one 3 oz serving per week of the foods listed above (even after your first year of treatment).**

**What are your questions?  
Please ask. We are here to help you.**

## **More high copper foods to avoid**

- Dried beans, dried peas, and lentils (soy, lima, garbanzo, navy, pinto, split peas)
- Soy flour, soy-based drinks, and tofu
- Nuts and seeds **(1-2 Tbsp (15-30 ml) smooth peanut butter daily is allowed)**
- Barley, wheat germ, millet, breads, and cereals with more than 2 grams of fibre per serving
- Mushrooms
- Sweet potatoes
- Vegetable juice cocktail
- Avocado
- Dried fruit (raisins, currants, etc.)
- Chocolate
- Cocoa

Once you have finished your first year of treatment, ask your doctor if you need to keep avoiding the foods listed above.

## **Best grain and cereal choices for at least the first year of treatment**

- White bread, 60% whole wheat bread
- White rice, white pasta, noodles made from refined flour
- Regular oatmeal, Cream of Wheat®
- Refined cereals (such as Cheerios™, Corn Flakes®, Rice Krispies®) that have 2 grams of fibre or less per serving

**If you are also following a vegetarian diet, ask for a referral to a dietitian.**

### **Remember, never eat organ meats:**

- › Liver
- › Heart
- › Kidney
- › Brain

