

FIBER

Fiber acts as an internal scrub brush for your body. Fiber comes from the structural part of plants and cannot be digested. There are both soluble and insoluble fibers in all fiber-containing foods. These fibers work differently, but both contribute to your health in the following areas of your body:

- Lower intestine: *insoluble fiber*, the type of fiber in whole grains, wheat bran and many vegetables, helps prevent hemorrhoids and other bowel problems.
- Blood sugar: *soluble fiber* can help control blood sugar in people with diabetes. This fiber is found in peas and beans (lentils, split peas, pinto beans, kidney beans, garbanzo beans and lima beans). It is also found in oats, barley, apples, oranges and carrots.
- Blood cholesterol: *soluble fiber* may lower some people's blood cholesterol.
- Waistline: high fiber foods are also lower calorie foods. By eating a high fiber, low-fat diet, it is possible to lose weight healthfully.

How much fiber do you need?

The American Dietetic Association and the National Cancer Institute recommend eating **20-35 grams of fiber per day**. This range makes it possible for people of different sizes to find the amount that works best for them. If you decide to add more fiber to your diet, here are some important tips to keep in mind:

Phasing in the fiber:

- *Gradually* add fiber to your diet over several weeks. Your body will adjust more smoothly.
- Don't overdo it! A VERY high fiber diet, 50-60 grams per day, can rob your body of valuable vitamins and minerals.
- Drink more fluids as you add more fiber. Fiber holds water, so to get the best "cleansing" value from fiber, remember to drink plenty of fluids (at least eight cups or glasses each day).
- Choose whole-grain breads, cereals, crackers, etc. instead of white breads or refined cereals and crackers.
- Try adding 1 or 2 tablespoons of wheat bran to your breakfast and slowly increase to 1/3 to 1/2 cup per day.
- Give brown rice a try.
- Enjoy whole fruits at mealtime or snacks instead of relying on fruit juices, which lack fiber.
- If you experience gas or bloating from eating dried beans, try this cooking method: when preparing dried beans, soak them in water, discard the soaking water and cook the beans in fresh water. The soaking water contains some of the carbohydrates that produce gas.
- At mealtime, include a cooked vegetable and a raw salad.
- For young children a diet too high in fiber may fill them up too quickly, making it difficult for them to get in enough calories and nutrients.

FIBER IN FOODS

Find the Fiber in Your Favorites

1. Circle your high fiber favorites in the list of foods below.
2. From your selection of favorites add up the grams of fiber in the foods you think you would eat each day. Did you reach the goal of 20-35 grams of fiber per day?
3. Consider trying one of the foods listed below that you've never eaten. Which ones do you think you would like to try?

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FOOD	SERVING SIZE	GRAMS OF DIETARY FIBER <i>(soluble & insoluble)</i>	FOOD	SERVING SIZE	GRAMS OF DIETARY FIBER <i>(soluble & insoluble)</i>
FRUITS			LEGUMES, COOKED		
Apple, with skin	1 medium	2.0 –2.5	Baked beans, canned	½ cup	7.0
Banana	1 medium	1.8	Black beans	½ cup	7.7
Blueberries	½ cup	1.7	Black-eyed peas, canned	½ cup	8.5
Cantaloupe	1/4	1.1	Green peas, cooked from frozen	½ cup	3.6
Figs, dried	2	3.5	Kidney beans	½ cup	7.3
Grapes, seedless	½ cup	1.0	Lentils	½ cup	3.7
Grapefruit, white or pink	1/2	1.6	Refried beans	½ cup	6.0
Kiwi	1	2.6	Soybeans, cooked from dry	½ cup	3.0
Orange	1 medium	3.1	BREADS, GRAINS, PASTA		
Peach, with skin	1 medium	1.4	Bagel	1	1.2
Pear, with skin	1 medium	4.3	Bran muffin	1 medium size	2.8
Pineapple, fresh or canned	½ cup	1.2	Corn bread muffin	1 medium size	1.6
Prunes, dried	3	1.8	French bread	1 slice	0.8
Raisins, seedless	¼ cup	1.9	Pumpernickel bread	1 slice	1.9
Strawberries	1 cup	3.9	Rice, brown, cooked	½ cup	1.7
Watermelon	1 cup	0.6	Rice, white, cooked	½ cup	0.0
VEGETABLES, COOKED			Spaghetti, cooked	½ cup	1.6
Asparagus, cooked from frozen	½ cup	1.6	Taco shell	1	1.1
Broccoli, cooked from frozen	½ cup	2.5	White Bread	1 slice	0.5

Brussels sprouts, cooked from fresh or frozen	½ cup	3.4	Whole-wheat bread (100% whole wheat)	1 slice	1.9
Corn, cooked from frozen	½ cup	3.4	SNACK FOODS		
Green Beans, cooked from frozen	½ cup	2.1	Corn chips	1 ounce	1.3
Onion, cooked from fresh	½ cup	1.5	Fig bar cookies	2 cookies	1.3
Potato, baked, with skin	1 medium	3.6	Graham crackers	2 crackers	0.6
Spinach, cooked from frozen	½ cup	2.5	Peanuts, dry roasted	¼ cup	2.9
Sweet potato, baked in skin	1 medium	3.4	Popcorn, air-popped	1 cup	0.9
Zucchini, cooked from fresh	½ cup	1.8	Rye crackers, whole grain	2 crackers	2.2
VEGETABLES, RAW			Sunflower seeds	¼ cup	2.3
Cabbage, shredded	1 cup	1.7	Walnuts, English	¼ cup	1.4
Carrots	1 medium	2.3	BREAKFAST CEREALS *		
Cauliflower	½ cup	1.3	All-Bran	1/3 cup	8.5
Celery	1 stalk	0.6	Bran Chex	2/3 cup	4.6
Cucumber, sliced	½ cup	0.5	Bran Flakes	¾ cup	5.3
Lettuce, romaine	1 cup	1.0	Cornflakes	1 – ¼ cup	0.6
Mushrooms, sliced	½ cup	1.5	Granola, lowfat	¼ cup	1.0 – 3.2
Spinach as salad greens	1 cup	1.9	Oat bran, raw	1/3 cup	4.9
Tomato	1 medium	1.6	Oatmeal, regular, quick & instant cooked	¾ cup	1.6
			Raisin Bran	¾ cup	4.8
			Wheat Bran	1/3 cup	11.4

* See the Nutrition Facts label for the fiber content of your favorite cereal. (If the label shows 10% of the Daily Value for fiber, this means that one serving contains 10% of the recommended 25 grams of fiber daily. To calculate grams of fiber in one serving: 10% x 25 grams = 2.5 grams of fiber.)