

Patient Information

FIBER NUTRITION

FIBER

Eating high fiber foods is a healthy habit for a number of reasons. A diet rich in fiber may help to protect against heart disease and some types of cancer, and the role of fiber in preventing constipation is well known. For people with diabetes, fiber may also help lower blood glucose levels. Since high fiber foods tend to be filling and take longer to eat, they can satisfy the appetite and promote weight control. Now that you're aware that fiber has a lot to recommend it, let's sort out the details and translate them into something useful in planning your eating.

TYPE OF FIBER

Although all fiber comes from plant products, there are two basic types, each working differently. The two types are usually mixed in foods, but most foods are richer sources of one than the other.

SOLUBLE FIBER (gums, mucilages, pectin)

BENEFITS

- *May help lower blood cholesterol.
- *Helps control blood sugar
- *Is more filling than other foods, so helps prevent overeating.

WHERE TO FIND IT

- All fruits, vegetables, and grains, but best sources are listed below:
- *Beans and peas (pintos, kidney beans, black eyed peas, lentils, etc.)
 - *Oats, especially oat bran
 - *Barley
 - *Apples
 - *Oranges
 - *Carrots
 - *Potatoes
 - *Psyllium husk (found in some bulk-forming natural laxatives)

INSOLUBLE FIBER

BENEFITS

- *Causes food to travel more quickly through the intestinal tract, helping prevent constipation.
- *Helps prevent diverticulosis (although during a flare up of symptoms, some high fiber foods may be irritating. In this case, consult your doctor or dietitian for details).

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- *Helps prevent hemorrhoids.
- *May help prevent some types of cancer, including colon cancer.

WHERE TO FIND IT

All fruits, vegetables, and grains, but richest in those listed below:

- *Wheat bran and germ
- *Popcorn
- *Brown rice
- *Peas
- *Whole grain breads and cereals
- *Potatoes, especially potato skins
- *Corn
- *Skin and seeds of fruits

TRANSLATING THE INFORMATION INTO ACTION

Fiber is most helpful when eaten as part of a low fat, well-balanced eating pattern. To develop a healthful way of eating, including about 20-35 grams of fiber every day, do the following:

*Aim for the amounts recommended in the Food Guide Pyramid. This will help you to get at least half of your calories every day from high carbohydrate foods like grains, fruits, and vegetables and will keep the amount of fat you eat to a reasonable level.

*If you are not used to eating much fiber, add high fiber foods gradually. A sudden increase can give you cramping, gas and diarrhea. If these problems occur, cut back on your high fiber foods and add them back gradually.

*Eat a variety of high fiber foods, including both soluble and insoluble fiber.

*Use foods in their most natural state because this gives you the most fiber, as well as vitamins and minerals:

- Whole fruits rather than juice,
- Unpeeled fruit and vegetables,
- Whole grains rather than refined ones.

*Include legumes (beans and peas) at least two to three times a week.

*Drink plenty of water (eight cups a day).

*Read nutrition information labels on foods. They show how much fiber the food provides. Choose foods that are high in fiber.

FIBER CONTENT OF SELECTED FOODS

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FOOD	AMOUNT	GRAMS OF FIBER
Pear (WITH SKIN)	1 medium	4.3
Strawberries	1 cup	3.9
Figs,dried	2	3.5
Orange	1 medium	3.1
Apple (with skin)	1 medium	3.0
Potato,baked (with skin)	1 medium	3.6
Brussels sprouts (cooked)	1/2 cup	3.4
Carrots (raw)	1 medium	2.3
Canned baked beans	1/2 cup	9.8
Kidney beans	1/2 cup	7.3
Lentils (cooked)	1/2 cup	3.7
Pumpnickel bread	1 slice	1.9
Whole wheat bread	1 slice	1.9
Brown rice (cooked)	1/2 cup	1.7
Bagel (plain)	1	1.2
Peanuts	1/4 cup	2.9
Popcorn,air popped	3 cups	2.7
Sunflower seeds	1/4 cup	2.3

Lakewood Pediatrics & Family Medicine
4003 N Roxboro Street
Durham ,NC 27704
Ph: 919 220-3333

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FIBER SUPPLEMENT

For diarrhea or constipation:

Citrucel or Metamucil, orange flavored, sugar free
1/2 tsp in 8oz of water, once a day for about 3 days (until no bloating)
increase to
1 tsp in 8 oz of water, once a day for about 3 days
1 tsp in 8 oz of water, twice a day, maintenance.

OR

1 cup applesauce
1 cup coarse unprocessed bran
3/4 cup prune juice

Take 1 tablespoon daily with 8 oz water.