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## **HIGH FIBER DIET**

### **What is fiber?**

“Roughage”, “bulk” and “bran” are all the terms that are used to mean fiber. Fiber is the part of the plant foods that cannot be digested by humans. It is found in breads, fruits, cereals, vegetables and grains. Surprising but true animal products such as meat, fish, poultry, eggs and dairy products do not contain any fiber.

Fiber comes in two basic forms: soluble and insoluble fiber. Soluble fiber dissolves in water. Foods that are high in soluble fiber include fruits, vegetables, oat bran, barley and some beans. Insoluble fiber does not dissolve in water but retains water and is used to soften and build up stool, thus preventing or easing constipation. It can be found in vegetables, whole grains and wheat bran.

### **Why do you need fiber?**

A regular daily intake of fiber has many advantages and can help even if you are healthy. Fiber can help keep bowels working regularly and help prevent constipation. Research shows that fiber can also reduce your chance of getting colon cancer. By increasing food bulk, fiber gives you brain more time to realize that your body is no longer hungry and helps prevent overeating. By providing bulk and softening stool, the pressure of hard bowel movements is eliminated. This decreases the risk of irritable bowel syndrome. Soluble fiber is also thought to lower cholesterol and control blood sugar levels in people with diabetes.

### **How much fiber do you need?**

Most Americans eat less than the recommended amount of fiber daily. The recommendation is 20-35 grams per day. Eating too much fiber can cause diarrhea and bloating. Because people vary in their sensitivity to fiber, the amount that a person can eat also varies. Start slow and build to a level that results in normal bowel movements.

### **Where can you get fiber?**

Ideally, you should be able to get all the fiber you need by eating high fiber foods. Fiber supplements should only be used when other restrictions prevent this. Fiber can be increased by eating foods in their natural state before peeling or juicing.

Cereals are a quick way to get fiber. Fruits can provide up to five grams of fiber in single serving. Fruits and vegetables with edible skins are higher in fiber. Cooking vegetables does not change the fiber content. Breads with whole grain flours and added fiber are also a good source of fiber. Bran muffins are popular as well, but may contain high levels of fat. Legumes and beans contain up to 12 grams of fiber per cup. High fiber snacks include seeds, nuts and popcorn.

Fiber is also available in bulking agents, such as Metamucil, Konsyl, Citrucel and Fibercon are available in drug stores. These also come in less expensive generic versions. Consult your physician before using these products if you have questions or problems or are taking any other medications. Remember to always read and follow the directions on the labels when using these products.

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### **Vegetables**

Beans	2.0 Fiber grams	½ cup serving
Broccoli	2.2 Fiber grams	½ cup serving
Brussel Sprouts	2.3 Fiber grams	½ cup serving
Carrots	2.0 Fiber grams	½ cup serving
Celery	1.0 Fiber grams	½ cup serving
Corn	4.0 Fiber grams	½ cup serving
Corn on the cob	5.9 Fiber grams	1 ear
Lettuce	1.0 Fiber grams	1 cup serving
Peas (canned)	4.0 Fiber grams	½ cup serving
Peas (dried)	7.9 Fiber grams	½ cup serving
Spinach	4.0 Fiber grams	1 cup serving

### **Legumes**

Beans (lima, kidney, baked)	10.0 Fiber grams	½ cup serving
Refried beans	12.0 Fiber grams	1 cup serving
Lentils	8.0 Fiber grams	1 cup serving
Peas (canned)	4.0 Fiber grams	½ cup serving
Peas (dried)	7.79 Fiber grams	½ cup serving

### **Fruit**

Apple with peel	3.5 Fiber grams	1 medium
Banana	2.4 Fiber grams	1 medium
Grapefruit (fresh)	0.6 Fiber grams	½ medium
Orange (fresh)	2.0 Fiber grams	1 medium
Peach (fresh)	3.0 Fiber grams	1 medium
Strawberries	3.0 Fiber grams	1 cup serving
Kiwi	5.0 Fiber grams	1 medium
Pear	4.5 Fiber grams	1 medium

### **Cereal**

Fiber One	14.0 Fiber grams	1 cup serving
All-Bran Extra Fiber	13.0 Fiber grams	1 cup serving
Raisin Bran	3.5 Fiber grams	1 cup serving

### **Grains/Breads**

Rice	0.8 Fiber grams	½ cup serving
Whole Wheat Bread	1.3 Fiber grams	1 slice
White, Rye, French-bread	0.7 Fiber grams	1 slice

### **Snacks**

	4.5 Fiber grams	3.5 cups serving
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