

Fiber for Seniors



Increasing Fiber in Your Diet:

- Read food labels and pick products that are higher in fiber.
- Use whole grain flour rather than white flour for baking.
- Eat fruits and vegetables with the skin.
- Try whole grains like whole wheat, corn, or oats.
- Substitute legumes (beans or peanuts) for meat a couple of times a week.
- Replace white rice with brown rice.
- Eat a high fiber cereal for breakfast or add fruit to your cereal in the morning.
- Snack on popcorn instead of potato chips.
- Eat romaine lettuce or spinach instead of iceberg lettuce.

Reading food labels can help you determine how much fiber you are getting in your diet. Foods that contain more than 4 grams of fiber are high fiber foods and foods that contain less than 2 grams of fiber are low fiber foods.

What is Fiber?

Fiber is a complex carbohydrate that does not breakdown during digestion. Fiber is found in plant foods. There are two types of fiber: soluble fiber and insoluble fiber. Soluble fiber is found in fruits and vegetables, dried beans, oats, barley, and rice. Insoluble fiber is often referred to as roughage and is found in wheat, whole grain breads and cereals, fruit and vegetable skins, nuts, and seeds. About 70% of our fiber intake is from insoluble fiber and 30% from soluble fiber.

Fiber Supplements

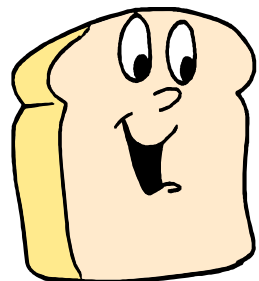
High fiber foods are usually high in other nutrients as well. It is hard to determine if the benefits from a high fiber diet all actually come from fiber or if other nutrients also contribute. Fiber supplements usually contain only one type of fiber, so eating a variety of different foods containing different types of fiber is a better option.

Benefits of eating fiber:

- Increases the feeling of fullness which helps control appetite and weight
 - Decreases the risk of colon cancer
- Soluble**
- Decreases the risk of heart disease
 - Helps manage blood glucose
- Insoluble**
- Keeps waste products moving through the digestive system
 - Reduces the symptoms in some digestive disorders
 - Decreases the transit time of food through the digestive tract
 - Prevents constipation
 - Promotes bowel regularity

When you want to increase fiber in your diet, make sure you do so gradually and drink plenty of fluids to keep it moving through your body. Don't eat all of your fiber for the day in one sitting, spread it out throughout the day.

The recommended fiber intake for people over 50 is 21 grams per day for women and 30 grams per day for men.



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