



the centre for

Health & Well Being

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FIBER

Fiber is essential to the function of digestion. It has the ability to stimulate gastrointestinal function and also has a positive impact on cardiovascular health, glucose tolerance, body weight and general health.

Fiber is found in every plant food and has two main forms:

1. Insoluble or cellulose: insoluble (indigestible) fiber such as wheat bran, absorbs water and swells to provide bulk to our digestive tract. This bulk or roughage aids the movement of food along the tract preventing constipation.
2. Soluble or pectin: soluble (digestible) fiber such as oat bran dissolves in water and makes a softer bulk. It is effective in reducing blood cholesterol levels by binding the potentially toxic bile salts released by the liver into the digestive tract.

The many nutritional benefits of fiber include:

- Delaying the early emptying of food from the stomach, allowing enzymes time to begin digestion
- providing greater and healthier formation of the intestinal wall
- Assisting in greater blood flow to the gut wall by increasing production and absorption of nutrients for the gut wall
- Regulating the proper rate and amount of macro-nutrient absorption, such as fats and sugars
- Increasing the absorption of micro-nutrients, such as calcium, magnesium and potassium
- Helping to maintain a healthy gut bacterial balance, therefore allowing proper bacterial function which enhances our immunity, and assists in B12 production which we use to attach iron to our red blood cells
- Increasing intestinal transit time so fewer toxins don't re-enter the blood stream by absorption through the gut wall
- Binding bile salt toxins that are released into the gut from the liver and gall bladder, therefore reducing damage to the intestinal wall
- Producing a larger, softer, easier to move stool
- Giving bulk to your meal, filling your gut faster with less food

Eating a variety of whole foods helps to obtain a mixture of fiber types. While fruits and vegetables provide important sources of water, vitamins, minerals, complex carbohydrates and fiber, they generally contain lesser amounts of fiber than do grains and legumes (see chart).

Drinking water (6/8 glasses day) provides fiber with the medium it needs to work correctly. Be sure your water is clean, healthy and mineral rich (not distilled).

A good amount of fiber to eat each day is 25-30 grams. The following easy to use chart provides examples of choices for daily fiber intake.

Eat fiber daily to keep you moving toward optimal health.

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Sources of Fiber

Daily recommended fiber is 25-30 grams

	Very High fiber [6 grams/serving]	High fiber [4 grams serving]	Good fiber [2 grams serving]
Fruits	1/2 C dried apricots	1 pear, peeled	1 orange / apple
	1/2 C dates	1/2 C organic raisins	1 banana / kiwi
	1/2 C dried figs	1/2 C cooked prunes	1 nectarine
			2 small plums
			1/2 C strawberries
			1/2 C raspberries
			1/2 C blueberries
			1/2 C canned pears
			1/2 C grapefruit
Vegetables		11g. potato with skin	1 raw tomato
		1/2 C green peas	1/2 C cooked spinach
		1/2 C sweet potatoes	2 C lettuce
			1/2 C carrots
			1/2 C brussel sprouts
			1/2 C beets
			1/2 C baked squash
			1/2 C stalk broccoli
Legumes	1 C cooked lentils	1/2 C cooked lentils	1/4 C cooked lentils
	1 C cooked beans	1/2 C cooked beans	1/4 C cooked beans
	1 C cooked millet	1/2 C cooked millet	1/4 C cooked millet
	1 C cooked buckwheat	1/2 C cooked buckwheat	1/4 C cooked buckwheat
	1 C brown rice	1/2 C brown rice	1/4 C brown rice
	1 C cooked spelt flakes	1/2 C cooked spelt flakes	1/4 C cooked spelt flakes
Seeds		1/3 C pumpkin seeds	1/3 C sunflower seeds
			1/4 C almonds
Breads and Cereals	1oz. All Bran	1oz. Raisin Bran	1 oz. Oatios
	1oz. 100% Bran cereal	1 bran muffin	1 oz. bran flakesl
	1 C cooked barley		1/2 C cooked oatmeal
	1 C cooked Kasha		1 whole wheat roll
			1 slice whole wheat bread