

# High Fiber Diet

Dietary fiber includes all parts of plant foods that your body cannot digest or absorb. Unlike other food components such as fats, proteins or carbohydrates — which your body breaks down and absorbs — fiber is not digested by your body. Therefore, it passes relatively intact through your stomach, small intestine, colon and out of your body. Fiber has several important roles in maintaining health.

Fiber is commonly classified into two categories: those that do not dissolve in water (insoluble fiber) and those that do (soluble fiber).

- **Insoluble fiber.** This type of fiber promotes the movement of material through your digestive system and increases stool bulk, so it can be of benefit to those who struggle with constipation or irregular stools. Whole-wheat flour, wheat bran, nuts and many vegetables are good sources of insoluble fiber.
- **Soluble fiber.** This type of fiber dissolves in water to form a gel-like material. It can help lower blood cholesterol and glucose levels. Soluble fiber is found in oats, peas, beans, apples, citrus fruits, carrots, barley and psyllium.

The amount of each type of fiber varies in different plant foods. To receive the greatest health benefit, eat a wide variety of high-fiber foods.

A high-fiber diet has many benefits, which include:

- Normalizes bowel movements.
- Helps maintain bowel integrity and health.
- Lowers blood cholesterol levels.
- Helps control blood sugar levels.
- Aids in weight loss.

Fiber recommendations for adults:

	<b>Age 50 and younger</b>	<b>Age 51 and older</b>
Men	38 grams	30 grams
Women	25 grams	21 grams

If you are not getting enough fiber each day, you may need to boost your intake. Good choices include:

- Grains and whole-grain products
- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Beans, peas and other legumes
- Nuts and seeds

Refined or processed foods — such as canned fruits and vegetables and pulp-free juice, white bread and pasta, and non-whole-grain cereals — are lower in fiber content.

Whole foods rather than fiber supplements are generally better. Fiber supplements do not provide the vitamins, minerals and other beneficial nutrients that high-fiber foods do. However, some people may still need a fiber supplement if dietary changes are not sufficient.

High-fiber foods are good for your health. But adding too much fiber too quickly can promote intestinal gas, abdominal bloating and cramping. Increase fiber in your diet gradually over a period of a few weeks. This allows the natural bacteria in your digestive system to adjust to the change. Also, drink plenty of water. Fiber works best when it absorbs water, making your stool soft and bulky

	Serving size	Total fiber (grams)*
Raspberries	1 cup	8.0
Pear, with skin	1 medium	5.5
Apple, with skin	1 medium	4.4
Strawberries (halves)	1 1/4 cup	3.8
Banana	1 medium	3.1
Orange	1 medium	3.1
Figs, dried	2 medium	1.6
Raisins	2 tablespoons	1.0
Spaghetti, whole-wheat, cooked	1 cup	6.2
Barley, pearled, cooked	1 cup	6.0
Bran flakes	3/4 cup	5.3
Oat bran muffin	1 medium	5.2

Oatmeal, quick, regular or instant, cooked	1 cup	4.0
Popcorn, air-popped	3 cups	3.5
Brown rice, cooked	1 cup	3.5
Bread, rye	1 slice	1.9
Bread, whole-wheat or multigrain	1 slice	1.9
Split peas, cooked	1 cup	16.3
Lentils, cooked	1 cup	15.6
Black beans, cooked	1 cup	15.0
Lima beans, cooked	1 cup	13.2
Baked beans, vegetarian, canned, cooked	1 cup	10.4
Sunflower seed kernels	1/4 cup	3.9
Almonds	1 ounce (23 nuts)	3.5
Pistachio nuts	1 ounce (49 nuts)	2.9
Pecans	1 ounce (19 halves)	2.7
Artichoke, cooked	1 medium	10.3
Peas, cooked	1 cup	8.8
Broccoli, boiled	1 cup	5.1
Turnip greens, boiled	1 cup	5.0
Sweet corn, cooked	1 cup	4.2
Brussels sprouts, cooked	1 cup	4.1
Potato, with skin, baked	1 medium	2.9
Tomato paste	1/4 cup	2.7
Carrot, raw	1 medium	1.7