

High Fiber Diet

Your physician has prescribed a high fiber diet for you. Fiber is important in the diet because it increases bulk and stimulates proper elimination thus preventing irregularity. Fiber is found in plants and is generally not digested or absorbed by the body. Many different types of fibers exist and they are grouped into two broad categories. Each has a role in promoting good health. The two general types are water soluble fibers and insoluble fibers. Water soluble fibers are found in oats, bran, dried beans, potatoes, seeds, apples, oranges and grapefruit. Insoluble fibers are found in wheat and corn bran, nuts and many fruits and vegetables.

Benefits of increased fiber:

- High fiber foods offer a plus for dieters. Since many high fiber foods are naturally bulkier and more filling than refined foods, you tend to eat fewer calories on a high fiber diet.
- Water soluble fibers can aid in the treatment of high cholesterol, diabetes and obesity. By forming a gel, water soluble fibers stay in your stomach longer and help slow food absorption.
- Insoluble fibers hold water and produce softer, bulkier stools, and can improve both diarrheal and constipation symptoms. They may help treat many colorectal diseases and may prevent colon cancer and diverticular disease.

Fiber supplements

Commercial fiber supplements are available ranging from bran tablets to purified cellulose (an insoluble fiber). Some examples are Metamucil, Konsyl, Benefiber, Citrucel, and others, as well as generic forms of each. While it is most beneficial to increase the amount of fiber by eating a variety of high fiber food sources, these supplements are also useful.

Avoiding problems with increasing fiber

When increasing your dietary fiber, remember to include a variety of soluble and insoluble fiber food sources including whole grain breads and cereals, fruits and vegetables. You should increase your intake gradually and work to a goal of 25-30 grams per day. As you increase your fiber intake, be sure to drink at least 8 glasses of fluid every day. Remember that water, milk, juice and decaffeinated sodas, tea and coffee are also sources of fluids. The exact amount of fiber added per day should be determined based on the amount of flatulence and bloating you experience. If you have too much gas and bloating, then you should decrease the amount of fiber. Remember, the overall goal is to increase the fiber in your diet gradually and maintain this over your lifetime.

The 5 Quickest Ways to 25 Grams of Fiber Per Day

1. Get Those Whole Grains!

- 2 slices of whole wheat bread = 4 gm of fiber
- 1 cup of cooked brown rice = 4 gm of fiber
- 1/4 cup of whole wheat flour, used in baking = 3 gm of fiber
- 2 slices of fiber-enriched bread = 3 gm of fiber
- 7 reduced-fat Triscuit crackers = 3 gm of fiber

2. Choose High-Fiber Breakfast Cereals

- 1 cup of Raisin Bran = 7.5 gm of fiber
- 1 cup of Quaker Squares = 5 gm of fiber
- 1 cup of Frosted Shredded Wheat = 5 gm of fiber
- 3/4 cup of cooked oatmeal = 3 gm of fiber
- 1 cup of cooked Cream of Wheat = 3 gm of fiber
- 1 cup of Multigrain Cheerios = 3 gm of fiber
- 1 cup of Wheaties = 3 gm of fiber

3. Eat Beans a Few Times a Week

- 1 cup of canned minestrone soup = 5 gm of fiber
- 1/2 cup of vegetarian or fat-free refried beans = 6 gm of fiber
- 1/4 cup of kidney beans added to a green salad = 3 gm of fiber
- 1 bean burrito at Taco Bell = 8 gm of fiber

4. Work In Fruits Whenever You Can

Try to get several servings every day. Add fruit to your breakfast, enjoy it as a snack and garnish your dinner plate with it! You can even have fruit with – or instead of – dessert!

- 1 apple = 3.7 gm of fiber
- 1 banana = 2.8 gm of fiber
- 1 pear = 4 gm of fiber
- 1 cup of strawberries = 3.8 gm of fiber

5. Work In Veggies Whenever You Can

Again, aim for several servings every day. Include a vegetable with lunch, have raw vegetables as an afternoon snack or a pre-dinner appetizer and enjoy a big helping with dinner. And make a point of having vegetarian entrees several times a week!

- 1 cup of cooked carrots = 5 gm of fiber
- 1 cup of cooked broccoli = 4.5 gm of fiber
- 1 cup of raw carrots = 4 gm of fiber
- 1 sweet potato = 4 gm of fiber
- 1 cup of cooked cauliflower = 3 gm of fiber
- 2 cups of raw spinach = 3 gm of fiber

Tips for Increasing Fiber in Your Diet

- Substitute whole wheat flour for half or all of the flour in home baked goods
- When buying breads, crackers and breakfast cereals, make sure that the first ingredient listed is whole wheat flour or another whole grain
- Substitute oat bran for 1/3 of all-purpose flour in baked goods recipes.
- Use brown rice, whole grain barley, bulgur (cracked wheat), buckwheat, groats (kasha) and millet in soups and salads or as cereals and side dishes
- Try a variety of whole wheat pastas in place of regular pasta
- Sprinkle bran in spaghetti sauce, sloppy joes, ground meat mixtures and casseroles, pancakes and other quick breads and in cooked cereals and fruit crisp toppings
- Eat skins and edible seeds of raw fruits and vegetables
- For high fiber snacks, eat fresh fruit and vegetables, whole grain crackers or popcorn
- For lunches, pick crunchy vegetables stuffed in whole wheat pita bread, salads and hearty vegetable and bean soups
- For dessert, bake berry pies, apples stuffed with prunes, dates and raisins; fruit compotes; whole wheat fruit breads, brown rice or whole wheat bread puddings; whole wheat cakes and cookies
- Try Middle Eastern, Oriental and Mexican dishes that make liberal use of vegetables, whole grains and dried beans
- Use whole grain or bran cereals for crunchy toppings on ice cream, yogurt, salads or casseroles. Nuts, toasted soybeans, sunflower kernels and wheat germ also can add interesting flavors and increase the fiber content of your meal
- Many vegetarian and high fiber cookbooks contain excellent fiber recipes

High Fiber Diet Plan

Breads and Grains (6-11 servings per day)

- Whole grain breads, muffins, bagels, or pita bread
- Rye bread
- Whole wheat crackers or crisp breads
- Whole grain or bran cereals
- Oatmeal, oat bran, or grits
- Barley, dry
- Wheat germ
- Whole wheat pasta
- Brown rice

Vegetables (3-5 servings per day)

- All vegetables such as asparagus, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, green beans, green peppers, onions, peas, potatoes with skins, snow peas, spinach, squash, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, zucchini.

Fruit (2-4 servings per day)

- All fruits such as apple, banana, berries, grapefruit, nectarine, orange, peach, and pears

Milk and Dairy (2-3 servings per day)

- All milk and dairy products

Meat and Meat Substitutes (2-3 servings per day)

- All beans and peas such as garbanzo beans, kidney beans, lentils, lima beans, split peas, and pinto beans
- All nuts and seeds such as almonds, peanuts, Brazil nuts, cashews, peanut butter, walnuts, sesame and sunflower seeds. If you are following a low-fat diet, use nuts and seeds only in moderation
- All meat, poultry, fish, and eggs

Fats and Snacks:

- Popcorn, whole-wheat pretzels, baked tortilla corn chips, trail mix made with dried fruits, nuts and seeds
- Cakes, breads, and cookies made with oatmeal, fruit, and nuts
- Bean dip