

Fiber Facts



What is Fiber?

Dietary fiber is the non-digestible parts of plants that form the support structures of leaves, stems, and seeds. Dietary fiber is found in minimally processed fruits, vegetables, legumes, and whole grain products. Functional Fiber or added Fiber is isolated non-digestible carbohydrates that have beneficial physiological effects in the human body and are added to processed foods. Dietary Fiber plus Functional Fiber equals Total Fiber, as listed on a Nutrition Facts food label.



Recommended Intake:

The USDA's Adequate Intake (AI) for Total Fiber is 25 grams/day for young women and 38 grams/day for young men or 14 g of fiber for every 1000 kcal. per day, based on intake levels observed to prevent heart disease. Americans do not consume enough fiber.

Benefits of a High Fiber Diet:

- ✓ Decreases cholesterol levels.
- ✓ Stabilizes insulin and blood sugar levels.
- ✓ Increases feeling of fullness, which may help with weight management.
- ✓ Bulks stools and improves stool motility, promoting regular bowel movements.
- ✓ Provides vitamins, minerals and other healthy, disease-fighting nutrients called phytochemicals.
- ✓ Decreases risk of colon cancer, Type 2 diabetes, and heart disease.

What about Fiber supplements?

Fiber rich foods include whole grains, fruits, and vegetables, which also are high in vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals. Ideally, one should strive to get adequate amounts of fiber from food. However, physiological limitations may limit the quantity of food one can eat. Over-the-counter, natural fiber supplements can be used when the diet is not providing enough fiber. These supplements do not cause any type of dependency, the way prescription or stimulant laxatives can.

Good Sources of Fiber:

FOOD	AMOUNT	FIBER (grams)
Apple w/skin	1 medium	3
Banana	1 medium	2
Pear with skin	Large	7
Strawberries	1 cup whole	3
Blueberries	1 cup	4
Dried Figs	2	4
Dried prunes	4	4
Orange	1 medium	3
Baked Sweet potato w/skin	1/2 medium	2
Cooked Spinach	1/2 cup	2
Raw carrots	1 medium	2
Brown Rice	1/2 cup	2
Whole Wheat Bread	1 slice	2
Whole grains (barley, quinoa)	1 cup	3
Oatmeal	3/4 cup	3
Beans/legumes (in general)	1 cup	14
Bran cereal	1 cup	10-14
Garbanzo beans	1 cup	11
Lentils	1 cup	11-14
Breakfast cereal (look for minimum of)		5/serving

How do I increase fiber in my diet?

- ✓ Increase fiber in your diet slowly to avoid stomach discomfort.
- ✓ Make half your grains whole grains.
- ✓ Try to eat fruit and /or vegetables with each meal and snack.
- ✓ Choose foods with at least 3 grams of fiber per serving.
- ✓ Increase fiber in meat dishes by adding beans and vegetables.
- ✓ Add fiber to dairy products by adding fruit, nuts, seeds, or cereal to yogurt.
- ✓ Choose raw fruits and vegetables over juice and canned fruits