



General Surgery

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FIBER IN YOUR DIET

WHAT IS FIBER?

Fiber is the portion of plant food that our bodies can't digest. There are two basic types.

Insoluble fibers- the kinds usually referred to as "roughage," include the woody or structural parts of plants, such as fruit and vegetable skins and the outer coating (bran) of wheat kernels, wheat and rye. This type of fiber is helpful in preventing and treating constipation.

Soluble fibers- are substances that dissolve and thicken in water to form gels. Beans, oatmeal, barley, broccoli and citrus fruits all contain soluble fiber. Oat bran is an especially rich source. This type of fiber may be helpful in lowering cholesterol levels.

WHY IS FIBER GOOD FOR YOU?

Insoluble fibers tend to speed the passage of material through the digestive tract, while soluble fibers tend to slow it down. However, since both forms of fiber absorb water, they both combat constipation by softening and enlarging the stool.

WHAT FOODS CONTAIN FIBER?

- Beans- One of the best sources of both soluble and insoluble fiber. A ½ cup serving of cooked kidney, navy, pinto or lima beans supplies about 4-7 grams of fiber, roughly half of which is soluble.
- Bran- Wheat bran is almost entirely soluble and is excellent for relieving constipation; it's found in whole-wheat products. Oat bran is also very high in fiber, more than half of it soluble.
- Fruits- Eaten with the skins intact, fruits are excellent sources of insoluble fiber. In addition, the fiber in apples, peaches, plums, bananas and citrus fruits is more than half soluble.
- Whole grains- Choose whole-grain cereals, breads and crackers when possible. Brown rice or wild rice will add fiber (mostly insoluble) and variety to a meal.
- Vegetables- All vegetables add some degree of insoluble fiber to the diet. Broccoli, raw carrots and cabbage are sources high in soluble fiber.
- Popcorn- A great high-fiber, and when air-popped and unbuttered, a low-calorie snack.

HOW TO ADD FIBER TO YOUR DIET?

- Increase fiber gradually. Too much too fast can cause gas, cramps, diarrhea and discouragement.
- Get fiber from a variety of sources. Experiment with different fruits, vegetables and grains, to help ensure a variety of nutrients.
- Drink lots of water. Fiber, especially soluble, absorbs large amounts of water; a high-fiber diet can actually constipate if not accompanied by plenty of fluid (6-8 cups per day)
- Include some fiber in every meal. Breakfast offers an especially good opportunity for incorporating bran and whole grain cereals or breads, along with fresh fruits, into your diet. Examples of high fiber cereals are All-Bran, 100% Bran, Bran Buds, Oat Bran, oatmeal and Raisin Bran.
- Substitute, don't add. Use whole grain breads and flours instead of more refined varieties; fruits and vegetables with skin intact instead of peeled; bran-containing cereals instead of low-fiber breakfast food.
- Keep an eye on fats. Avoid heavy sauces for high-fiber starch dishes (for example, cheese sauce on broccoli, French fries or fried potatoes). And even when a product is advertised as high in fiber, remember to check the label for fat content. Some high-fiber cereals contain added, undesirable saturated fats.
- **Goal for Dietary Fiber:** 25 to 35 grams of dietary fiber per day



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FIBER CONTENT OF FOODS

(Goal: 25 to 35 grams per day)

	Vegetables (1/2 cup cooked or 1 small)	Fruits (1/2 cup or 1 small)	Breads & Cereals (1/2 cup or 1 slice)	Beans, Nuts & Seeds (1/2 cup)
High Fiber (more than 3 grams per serving)	Brussels sprouts Corn Parsnips Peas	Blackberries Dried dates Raspberries Apple (with skin) Pear (with skin) Prunes (3) Raisins (1/4 cup) Strawberries (1 cup) Figs (3)	Barley (cooked) <u>Cereals:</u> Oat bran Wheatabix Shredded Wheat (1 biscuit) (contain > than 10 g per serving) All Bran All Bran Buds 100% bran Fiber 1	Garbanzo beans (chick pe) Kidney beans Lima beans Navy beans Pinto beans Baked beans Dried peas Lentils
Medium Fiber (2-3 grams per serving)	Beans (green & string) Broccoli Carrot Chard Eggplant Canned pumpkin Spinach Winter squash Sweet potato Yam Potato with skin	Apple (without skin) Blueberries Boysenberries Crabapple Cranberries Currants Kiwi Lemon Lime Orange Pear Small plantain Banana Peach (with skin) Pear (without skin)	Bulgar (cooked) Bran (12 tbsp) Flax (cooked, 1 tbsp) Wheat germ (1 tbsp) Dark rye 100% whole wheat flour Graham wafers (3) Oatcakes (2) Rye crisp bread (2) Bran muffins Nutrigrain waffles Wild rice <u>Cereals:</u> Grape Nuts Mini Wheats Corn Bran Raisin Bran	Peanut butter (2 tbsp)
Low-Medium Fiber (1-2 grams per serving)	Asparagus Cabbage Cauliflower Onions Green peppers Potato without skin Radish Bean sprouts Tomatoes Turnip Summer squash Snow peas zucchini Kale leaves Bean sprouts Celery, diced Mushrooms, sliced	Applesauce Apricot Dried apricot (5 halves) Cherries Grapefruit Peach (without skin) Pineapple Strawberries (1/2 cup) Tangerine Nectarine Cantaloupe (1/4 melon)	Oatmeal (coked) Whole wheat pasta Cracked wheat Pumpernickel Rye and whole wheat bread Whole wheat crisp bread Mixed grain bread Brown rice Air-popped popcorn (1 cup) <u>Cereals:</u> Total Just Right Special K Fiber	Almonds & cashews (10) Peanuts (15) Walnuts (6 whole) Sesame seeds (1 tbsp) Sunflower seeds (2 tbsp)

