

FOCUS on Fiber



National Fiber Focus Month

What is Fiber?

Dietary fiber, also referred to as roughage or bulk, includes all parts of plant foods that your body cannot digest or absorb. There are two types of dietary fiber: soluble and insoluble. Both are important for health, digestion and preventing disease.

Soluble Fiber

- Dissolves in water to form a gel-like substance .
- Helps lower cholesterol levels by binding to cholesterol in the digestive tract possibly reducing the risk of heart disease.
- Regulates blood sugar levels by slowing digestion and absorption so that carbohydrates (sugar) from food enter the bloodstream more slowly.
- Foods rich in soluble fiber include oat bran, fruits, veggies, brown rice, nuts, flax seeds, legumes (kidney, pinto, navy, garbanzo beans and black-eyed peas) and barley.

Insoluble Fiber

- Passes through the digestive tract unchanged.
- Helps keep your body regular by promoting movement of food materials through your digestive system faster and easier. This helps prevent constipation and possibly reduce the risk of colon cancer and hemorrhoids.
- Insoluble fibers are found in the skins of fruits, vegetables and legumes as well as in wheat bran, whole grain breads and cereals.

How Much Fiber Do You Need?

- The recommended daily amount of fiber is **25 grams for adult women** and **38 grams for adult men**. After age 50, your daily fiber needs drops to **21 grams for women** and **30 grams for men**.
- Most people in the US average less than 15 grams per day.
- Read labels to select foods with more than 3 grams of fiber per serving.

Fiber



Ways to Increase Fiber in Your Diet

- Leave skin on fruits and vegetables.
- Eat a variety of beans.
- Replace refined grain products such as white bread with whole grain products. Try whole grain pasta instead of white pasta. Try mixing a high fiber cereal with one of your old favorites.

Always Remember

- It is important to increase fluid intake as you increase fiber intake.

Sample Menu with 35g Fiber

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
-1 large orange -2 biscuits shredded wheat -1 cup 1% milk Total Fiber: 10 g	-Bean Burrito with: 1 wheat tortilla ½ cup black beans chopped onions -1 oz low fat cheese -salsa -½ cup shredded romaine lettuce -1 medium pear -1 cup 1% milk Total Fiber: 15 g	-4 oz skinless chicken breast -½ cup cooked barley in low sodium chicken broth -½ cup steamed broccoli and ½ cup steamed cauliflower -1 cup Romaine salad with 1 sliced tomato 2 tbsp light dressing -½ cup fresh cubed pineapple Total Fiber: 10 g

So Where's the Fiber?



1. Beans.

Think 3 bean salad, bean burritos, chili, soup.



2. Whole Grains.

That means whole-wheat bread, pasta, etc.

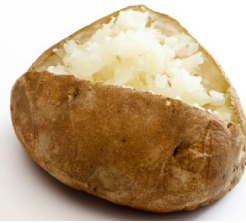


3. Brown rice.

White rice doesn't offer much fiber.



4. **Nuts.** Almonds, pecans, and walnuts have more fiber than other nuts.



5. **Baked potato with skin.** The potato skin is the source of fiber.

6. **Berries.** All the seeds, plus the skin, give great fiber to any berry.



7. **Bran cereal.** Actually, any cereal that has 5 grams of fiber or more in a serving counts as high fiber.



8. Oatmeal.

Whether its microwaved or stove-cooked, oatmeal is a good fiber source.



9. **Vegetables.** The crunchier, the better!

10. **Popcorn.** Another great source of fiber.

