
Healthy Eating Guidelines for Increasing Your Fibre Intake

Dietary fibre includes all parts of plant foods that your body can't digest or absorb. Fibre is also known as roughage or bulk.

There are two types of fibre: soluble and insoluble. Most fibre containing foods have a mix of both.

- **Soluble fibre** attracts water and turns it to gel. It can help lower blood cholesterol levels, control blood glucose (sugar) levels and slow the digestion of food so you feel full longer.
 - Soluble fibre is found in oat bran, barley, psyllium, nuts and seeds, dried beans, peas and lentils and some vegetables and fruit.
- **Insoluble fibre** helps to increase stool bulk. It may improve constipation and promote a healthy digestive system and regular bowel movements.
 - Insoluble fibre is found in the skins of vegetables and fruit, whole grains and wheat bran.

A high fibre diet can help to lower your risk for colon cancer, heart disease and manage digestive conditions such as diverticulosis.

A healthy diet should include 25 grams of fibre per day for women and 38 grams of fibre per day for men.

This fact sheet provides tips on how you can include more fibre-rich foods in your eating pattern.



Steps you can take

Most people can meet their fibre needs by eating a variety of healthy foods that includes vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds. Talk to a registered dietitian if you need help increasing the amount of fibre in your diet.

Here are some tips to eat more high fibre foods every day:

- **Whole Grains**

- Choose whole grain products over refined grain products. Examples include whole wheat bread and pasta, oats, pot barley, brown rice, wild rice, quinoa and millet.
- Use whole grain bread, rolls, pita or bagels when making toast or sandwiches instead of white bread.
- Add whole grains such as barley or wild rice to soups and salads.
- Replace at least half of the white flour with whole-wheat flour when making baked goods.
- Add wheat germ to smoothies, muffins and pancakes.
- Add bran, ground flax seeds or chia seeds to your breakfast cereal, yogurt, soups or salads.
- Choose high fibre breakfast cereals that have at least 4 g of fibre per serving.

- **Vegetables and Fruit**

- Fill half of your plate with vegetables or fruit. Choose dark leafy green and colourful vegetables such as kale, Swiss chard, collard greens, spinach or Brussels sprouts.
- Eat the peels of your vegetables including potatoes, cucumbers and eggplant and whole fruits like apples, pears and plums whenever possible.
- Have fruit as a snack or as a dessert. Oranges, apples, grapes and bananas are easy to pack. Guava, persimmon and kumquat are exotic high fibre fruits worth trying.
- Eat fresh fruit instead of drinking juice.
- Add mashed or grated vegetables like beets, carrots and zucchini to cake batters, meatballs and muffins.
- Add vegetables like beets, turnips, carrots, and celery to soups.
- Garnish salads, cereals or yogurt with blueberries, blackberries raspberries, blackberries and orange segments.

- **Legumes**

- Add beans, peas or lentils to soups, stews and casseroles. For example, add lentils to spaghetti sauce and black beans or chickpeas to soup.
 - Roast chickpeas or steam edamame (soybeans in a pod) for an easy snack.
 - Serve legume-based dips such as hummus and white or black bean dip with cut up vegetables.
 - Cook more vegetarian dishes that include beans and legumes such as vegetable stir-fries, lentil daal, chana masala, lentil soup, bean salads or falafel.
 - Add lentils or mashed chickpeas to meatballs, meat sauces and hamburgers.
- **Nuts and Seeds**
 - Sprinkle pasta dishes with pine nuts and stir-fries with sesame seeds or peanuts.
 - Grab a handful of unsalted nuts (60 mL (¼ cup)) as a quick snack.
 - Garnish salads with walnuts, sliced almonds, pumpkin seeds or sunflower seeds.
 - Top cereal or yogurt and fruit with walnuts, chia seeds, ground flax seeds or hemp hearts.
 - Make your own trail mix with unsalted nuts, candied ginger, dried apricots or other dried fruit.

Increase the amount of fibre you eat slowly

Adding too much fibre too quickly may cause gas, bloating and cramping.

- Slowly increase the amount of fibre you eat each day to allow your body to adapt.
- Divide fibre-containing foods throughout the day at both meals and snacks.
- Drink plenty of water as you increase the amount of fibre.

Read Food Labels

- Compare products and pick the one that has the most fibre. Make sure you are comparing the same serving size.
- Check the Nutrition Facts table on packaged foods for:
 - Grams of fibre in a serving. High-fibre foods have 4 or more grams of fibre per serving.
 - The % Daily Value (% DV). 5% DV or less is a little and 15% DV or more is a lot for all nutrients. The higher % is better for fibre.
- Look for ingredients such as bran, whole grain whole wheat, oatmeal or rye flour.

Sample menu

Here is an example of how you can increase your fibre intake with only a few small changes:

Low Fibre Diet	Fibre (g)	Fibre (g)	High Fibre Diet
Breakfast			Breakfast
125 mL (½ cup/30 g) corn flake cereal	0.6	4.9	125 mL (½ cup/30 g) bran flake cereal
250 mL (1 cup) low fat milk	0.0	0.0	250 mL (1 cup) low fat milk
1 slice (35 g) white toast (35 g)	1.3	2.4	1 slice (35 g) whole wheat toast
15 mL (1 Tbsp) jam	0.2	1.3	15 mL (1 Tbsp) natural peanut butter
125 mL (½ cup) orange juice	0.3	2.3	1 medium orange
Lunch			Lunch
2 slices (72 g) white bread	2.4	4.2	2 slices (66 g) whole wheat bread
75 g tuna salad	0.0	0.0	75 g tuna salad

Low Fibre Diet	Fibre (g)	Fibre (g)	High Fibre Diet
15 mL (1 Tbsp) light mayonnaise	0.0	0.0	15 mL (1 Tbsp) light mayonnaise
1 medium leaf lettuce	0.1	6.7	½ avocado
½ tomato, sliced	0.8	0.8	½ tomato, sliced
125 mL (½ cup) strawberry yogurt	0.0	0.0	125 mL (½ cup) vanilla yogurt
		1.1	30 mL (2 Tbsp) fresh raspberries
Snack			Snack
1 small apple (157 g)	3.6	4.7	1 small pear (152 g)
Water			Water
Supper			Supper
75 g baked chicken breast	0.0	0.0	75 g baked chicken breast
125 mL (½ cup) mashed potato	1.7	4.0	1 medium baked potato with skin
125 mL (½ cup) carrots	2.2	2.2	125 mL (½ cup) carrots
250 mL (1 cup) romaine lettuce salad	1.2	2.0	125 mL (½ cup) broccoli
250 mL (1 cup) low fat milk	0.0	0.0	250 mL (1 cup) low fat milk
125 mL (½ cup) vanilla pudding	0.0	1.3	125 mL (½ cup) fresh fruit cocktail
Snack			Snack
4 melba toast crackers	1.3	2.4	½ whole wheat pita
30 g (1 oz) cheddar	0.0	3.7	60 mL (¼ cup) hummus

Low Fibre Diet	Fibre (g)	Fibre (g)	High Fibre Diet
cheese			
125 mL (½ cup) grapes	1.0	1.0	125 mL (½ cup) grapes
Water			Water
Total Fibre	16.7 g	45.1 g	Total Fibre

Source: Canadian Nutrient File 2015. Available from: <https://food-nutrition.canada.ca/cnf-fce/index-eng.jsp>



Additional Resources

- Canada's Food Guide <https://food-guide.canada.ca>
- Food Sources of Fibre <https://www.pennutrition.com/viewhandout.aspx?Portal=UbY=&id=J8zvUQA=&PreviewHandout=bA==>

These resources are provided as sources of additional information believed to be reliable and accurate at the time of publication and should not be considered an endorsement of any information, service, product or company.



Notes

Distributed by:

