

High-Fiber Foods



High-fiber foods have been shown to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and to help to keep your digestive system healthy. Find out which foods are high-fiber foods.

Dietary Fiber

Dietary fiber is only found in plants, and functions like a skeleton to help maintain their shape and structure. Humans eat plants but we cannot digest the fiber so it passes through the small intestine into the colon. The fiber helps to keep the colon healthy. Some disorders like diverticulitis, constipation and irregularity may be connected with not getting enough fiber in the diet.

Types of Dietary Fiber

Insoluble fiber is the type of dietary fiber found in high-fiber foods like whole grains, nuts, wheat bran and vegetables. Insoluble fiber does not dissolve in water so it helps to move material through the colon faster by increasing the bulk of the stool. This can be very helpful to people who suffer from constipation or irregularity. Diets high in insoluble fiber may also decrease the risk of diabetes.

Soluble fiber is also found in many high-fiber foods like oats, citrus fruits, apples, barley, psyllium, flax seeds and beans. Soluble fiber absorbs water, which helps to soften stools making them easier to eliminate from the body. Some soluble fibers called beta glucan bind to bile acids which contain cholesterol. A high-fiber diet with this type of soluble fiber has been shown to reduce cholesterol closer to healthy levels.

High-Fiber Foods

According to the Institute of Medicine:

The recommended intake for total fiber for adults 50 years and younger is set at 38 grams for men and 25 grams for women, while for men and women over 50 it is 30 and 21 grams per day, respectively, due to decreased food consumption.

People who currently have low-fiber diets may want to increase their daily intake of high-fiber foods slowly because some fiber may increase gas and bloating. The body adjusts the increased amount of fiber over time and the gas and bloating will decrease.

Here are some examples of delicious and healthy high-fiber foods from the USDA National Nutrient Database:

- one-half cup cooked navy beans - 9.5 g
- one-half cup baked beans, canned – 9 g
- one-half cup cooked lentils – 7.8 g
- one-half cup cooked black beans – 7.5 g
- one-half cup dates – 7.1 g
- one cup raisin bran cereal – 7 g
- one-half cup cooked kidney beans – 6.5 g
- one-half cup cooked lima beans – 6.7 g
- one-half cup canned tomato paste – 5.9 g
- one-half cup cooked garbanzo beans – 6.2 g
- one-half cup bean with ham soup – 5.6 g
- one-half cup frozen red raspberries – 5.5 g
- one medium bran muffin – 5 g
- one-half Asian pear – 5 g
- one-half cup cooked artichoke – 4.5 g
- one-half cup frozen peas, cooked – 4.4 g
- one cup oatmeal – 4 g
- one-half cup frozen mixed vegetables, cooked – 4 g
- one-half cup raw blackberries – 3.8 g
- one-half cup canned pumpkin – 3.5 g
- one-half cup cooked whole-wheat spaghetti – 3.4 g
- 24 almonds – 3.3 g
- one apple with skin – 3.3 g
- one-half cup cooked barley 3 g
- one cup broccoli – 2.4 g
- one red sweet pepper – 2.4 g
- one nectarine – 2.3 g
- 28 peanuts – 2.3 g
- one slice whole grain bread – 2 g
- 15 walnut halves – 2 g

Fiber Supplements

Fiber supplements are available and may be added to a low-fiber diet, but fiber supplements shouldn't replace high-fiber foods in your diet because high-fiber foods are usually high in vitamins and minerals as well. If you find it hard to get the recommended amounts of fiber, talk to your coach about our Herbalife fiber products.

Tips for fitting in fiber

Need ideas for high-fiber meals and snacks? Try these suggestions:

- Start your day with a high-fiber breakfast cereal — 5 or more grams of fiber per serving. Opt for cereals with "bran" or "fiber" in the name. Or add a few tablespoons of unprocessed wheat bran to your favorite cereal.
- Add crushed bran cereal or unprocessed wheat bran to baked products such as meatloaf, breads, muffins, casseroles, cakes and cookies. You can also use bran products as a crunchy topping for casseroles, salads or cooked vegetables.
- Switch to whole-grain breads. These breads list whole wheat, whole-wheat flour or another whole grain as the first ingredient on the label. Look for a brand with at least 2 grams of dietary fiber per serving.
- Substitute whole-grain flour for half or all of the white flour when baking bread. Whole-grain flour is heavier than white flour. In yeast breads, use a bit more yeast or let the dough rise longer. When using baking powder, increase it by 1 teaspoon for every 3 cups of whole-grain flour.
- Eat more whole grains and whole-grain products. Experiment with brown rice, barley, whole-wheat pasta and bulgur.
- Take advantage of ready-to-use vegetables. Mix chopped frozen broccoli into prepared spaghetti sauce. Snack on baby carrots.
- Eat more beans, peas and lentils. Add kidney beans to canned soup or a green salad. Or make nachos with refried black beans, baked tortilla chips and salsa.
- Eat fruit at every meal. Apples, bananas, oranges, pears and berries are good sources of fiber.
- Make snacks count. Fresh and dried fruit, raw vegetables, and low-fat popcorn and whole-grain crackers are all good choices.

High-fiber foods are good for your health. But adding too much fiber too quickly can cause intestinal gas, abdominal bloating and cramping. Increase fiber in your diet gradually over a period of a few weeks. This allows the natural bacteria in your digestive system to adjust to the change. Also, drink plenty of water. Fiber works best when it absorbs water, making your stool soft and bulky. Without the added water, you could become constipated.