

Fiber is Your Friend

Why eat Fiber?

Fiber provides health benefits through prevention and management of some diseases.

- Reduces **constipation**. Fiber softens and increases the bulk of bowels, easing bowel movements.
- Reduces the risk of **diverticulitis** by reducing constipation.
- It can **lower cholesterol** when combined with a low fat diet.
- Helps with **weight management** by increasing the feeling of fullness.
- Helps with **diabetes** by slowing the absorption of sugar.
- Reduces the risk of **colon cancer** by diluting potential cancer causing agents.



What Is Fiber?

Fiber is the indigestible part of plants in two general categories:

1) Soluble Fiber

- Dissolves in water to form a gel and binds with fats and cholesterol so they are not absorbed by the body. It also slows the absorption of sugar.
- Is fermented by bacteria in the colon, producing beneficial by-products.
- Is in oat bran and the softer parts of fruits, vegetables and beans.



2) Insoluble Fiber

- Increases bulk and softness of the bowel, easing bowel movements.
- Is in the structural parts of plants like the stalks and skin of fruits, vegetables and wheat bran.

How much Fiber?

25 grams a day for women and 35 grams a day for men.

- **Increase fiber consumption slowly** (1-3 grams per week) to avoid discomfort from gas.
- **Drink a lot more water** or the fiber can worsen constipation.
- **Eat lots of different grains, beans, fruits and vegetables** to get the most benefit.



Look for whole grain breads with 3+ grams of fiber per serving and cereals with 5+ grams of fiber per serving.

Whole Grains 1/4 cup dry	Fiber grams*	Beans ½ cup cooked	Fiber grams*	Fruits & Vegetables 1 med. sized fruit, ½ cup cooked or 1 cup raw vegetables	Fiber grams**
Brown Rice	2	Great Northern beans	6	Acorn squash	5
Barley	5	Black beans	8	Broccoli	3
Bulgar	7	Lentils	7	Green peas	4
Quinoa	3	Pinto beans	6	Apple	3
Rolled Oats	2	Red Kidney beans	8	Banana	3
Steel cut oats	4	Split peas	8	Pear	5

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References

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