



Dietary Fiber

Why is a high-fiber diet important? High-fiber foods and adequate fluid intake can help keep your digestive system healthy reducing your risk for developing colon polyps, diverticulosis, and constipation. High-fiber foods have also been shown to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes, and can lower your cholesterol.

What is dietary fiber? Dietary fiber is found in plants. There are two types of dietary fiber. The first is insoluble fiber found in foods like whole grains, nuts, and vegetables. Insoluble fiber does not dissolve in water so it adds bulk to your stool and helps material move more quickly through the colon. Soluble fiber is found in foods like oats, citrus fruits, apples, barley, psyllium, flax seeds and beans. Soluble fiber absorbs water making the stool softer and easier to pass. Soluble fiber also helps to lower your cholesterol level.

How much dietary fiber do I need?

Women over 50 years of age: 21 grams	Men over 50 years of age: 30 grams
Women age 50 and younger: 25 grams	Men age 50 and younger: 38 grams

If you eat a low-fiber diet now, you may want to increase your fiber intake slowly because some fiber may cause gas and bloating. Your body will slowly adjust to your increase in dietary fiber and these symptoms will decrease. Follow your doctor's recommendation for dietary fiber intake.

How will I know how much fiber is in the food I eat? Read the nutrition labels on food packages to find out how much dietary fiber is in each serving of the food you eat. A list of fiber content of some healthy high-fiber foods is on the next page.

Can dietary fiber supplements add to or replace high-fiber foods? Fiber supplements may be added to a low-fiber diet but should not be taken in place of high-fiber foods because supplements do not contain the vitamins and minerals that are also found in high-fiber foods.

References: http://nutrition.about.com/od/foodfun/a/high_fiber_food.htm?p=1 High-Fiber Foods.
Why you need dietary fiber. By Shereen Jegtvig. Updated July 14.
<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/high-fiber-foods/NU00582/METHOD=print>
High-fiber foods. August 19, 2008
www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/cgi-bin/nut_search.pl.
USDA Nutrient Database for standard reference.

Foods High in Fiber	Serving Size	Dietary Fiber in Grams per Serving
Fruits		
Blueberries, Strawberries	1 cup	3–4
Blackberries, Raspberries	½ cup	4
Banana , Mangos	1 medium	3
Rhubarb	½ cup	3
Apple, Orange	1 medium	4
Pear	1 medium	6
Prunes, Figs (dried)	½ cup	6–8
Avocado	1 cup	10
Whole grains		
Bread (rye, whole wheat, multigrain)	1 slice	2
Brown rice, Oatmeal	1 cup cooked	4
Quinoa	1 cup cooked	5
Barley	1 cup cooked	6
Pasta (whole wheat)	1 cup cooked	6
Fiber One Cereal Honey Cluster Flakes	1 cup	10
Fiber One Cereal Original	½ cup	14
Nuts, Seeds and Beans		
Flaxseed	1 Tablespoon	2.8
Almonds, Pistachio	1 ounce	3–4
Seeds (sunflower, sesame)	¼ cup	3–4
Popcorn	3 cups popped	4
Chia seeds	1 Tablespoon	5.5
Edamame (whole green soy bean)	1 cup	6
Chickpeas	1 cup	12
Beans (lima, pinto, black)	1 cup	14–15
Beans (kidney, lentils, baked beans, great northern)	1 cup	16
Beans (navy)	1 cup	19
Vegetables		
Spinach or Romaine Lettuce	2 cups raw	1.4–1.9
Corn on Cob	1 ear	2
Yellow Squash, Zucchini	1 cup cooked	3
Potato (baked, red, sweet)	1 medium	3–4
Greens	1 cup cooked	4–5
Broccoli, Cauliflower, Carrots	1 cup cooked	5
Brussels Sprouts, Acorn Squash	1 cup cooked	6
Peas (split, black-eyed, green)	½ cup	7–8
Artichoke	1 medium	10