



Fibre and Your Health

What is fibre?

Fibre, also called dietary fibre, is the part of plant foods that the body cannot digest. Fibre is found in foods like vegetables and fruit, whole grain products, nuts and seeds, and legumes (dried peas, beans and lentils). Fibre can be either insoluble or soluble. Most foods have a combination of both.

Why is fibre important?

Insoluble fibres can help keep your gut healthy and prevent constipation.

Soluble fibres can help:

- Lower your blood cholesterol level
- Control your blood sugar levels
- Keep you feeling full longer, which can help you to control your weight

Dietary fibre may also help prevent colon cancer.

How much fibre do I need?

Depending on your age and sex, aim for the following amount of fibre each day:

Age (years)	Male	Female
1 to 3	19 g	19 g
4 to 8	25 g	25 g
9 to 13	31 g	26 g
14 to 18	38 g	26 g
19 to 50	38 g	25 g
51 to 70+	30 g	21 g
Pregnancy (any age)	/	28 g
Breast feeding (any age)	/	29 g

g = gram

People with intestinal or bowel diseases may not be able to eat large amounts of fibre. Speak with your health care provider or registered dietitian to find out how much fibre is right for you.

How can I increase the amount of fibre I eat?

Add additional fibre to your diet slowly to limit gas, cramping and discomfort. As you increase the amount of fibre in your diet, drink more fluids such as water to help keep your bowel movements soft.

Choose high fibre foods every day. Here are some tips to get you started:

- Start the day with a high fibre breakfast cereal (see “Food Sources of Fibre” table for ideas)
- Choose fresh, frozen and canned vegetables and fruit. Juice is not high in fibre
- Eat 100% whole grain breads, brown rice and whole wheat pasta
- Add cooked legumes, like lentils or beans, to your soup, casserole or salad
- Add dried fruits, nuts or seeds to yogurt, muffins, or salads, or eat them on their own

If you find it hard to eat enough fibre from food, talk to your health care provider or registered dietitian about a fibre supplement.

Tips for Reading Food Labels

Check the Nutrition Facts table on the package for the amount of fibre in a serving. This is usually shown in grams. Look for labels that say “high” or “very high” source of fibre, which means the food has at least 4 to 6 grams of fibre per serving.

Check the ingredient list. Look for ingredients such as bran, whole grain wheat, oatmeal or rye flour. Enriched wheat flour and unbleached flour are both refined white flour and are not good sources of fibre. The word multigrain may mean that a small amount of whole grain has been added to enriched flour. Multigrain does not mean that the food is a good source of fibre.

For more nutrition information, call **8-1-1** to speak with a registered dietitian.

Food Sources of Fibre

Food	Portion	Fibre (grams) Insoluble and Soluble
All bran cereals (any kind)	30 g	11*
Almonds, roasted	60 mL or ¼ cup	4
Apple with skin	1 medium	4
Banana	1 medium	2
Black beans, cooked or canned baked beans	175 mL or ¾ cup	9 to 10
Blackberries or raspberries	125 mL or ½ cup	4
Bran, 100% natural wheat bran	30 mL or 2 Tbsp	3
Bran flakes	30 g	5*
Bread, sprouted grain	35 g or 1 slice	3 to 5*
Brussels sprouts	4 sprouts	3
Corn, carrot, or broccoli, cooked	125 mL or ½ cup	2
Dates, dried	3 dates	2
Edamame/green soy beans, cooked and shelled	175 mL or ¾ cup	6
Flax seeds, ground	15 mL or 1 Tbsp	2
Garbanzo beans (chickpeas), cooked	175 mL or ¾ cup	6
Green peas, cooked	125 mL or ½ cup	4
Hummus	175 mL or ¾ cup	7 to 11
Kidney beans, dark red, cooked	175 mL or ¾ cup	9
Kiwi fruit	1 large	3
Lentils, cooked	175 mL or ¾ cup	6
Mango	1 fruit	3
Mixed vegetables, cooked	125 mL or ½ cup	3
Oat Bran, prepared	175 mL or ¾ cup	3 to 4*
Oatmeal (large oats), prepared	175 mL or ¾ cup	3 to 4*
Peanut butter, natural	30 mL or 2 Tbsp	3
Peanuts, dry, roasted	60 mL or ¼ cup	3
Pear, canned halves	125 mL or ½ cup	2
Pear, with skin	1 medium	5
Popcorn, popped	500 mL or 2 cups	2.4
Potato, with skin	1 medium	4
Raisin Bran	30g	4*
Red River® cereal, prepared	175 mL or ¾ cup	4*
Shreddies or Spoon Size Shredded Wheat	30g	4*
Soy nuts, roasted	175 mL or ¾ cup	7
Split peas, cooked	175 mL or ¾ cup	4
Sunflower seed kernels, dried, hulled	60 mL or ¼ cup	4
Whole wheat bread, commercial	35g or 1 slice	2*
Whole wheat spaghetti, cooked	125 mL or ½ cup	2*

g = gram, mL = millilitre, Tbsp = tablespoon

*Check the label to confirm the amount