

# FIBER

Found only in plant foods, such as whole grains, fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts, and seeds, fiber is composed of complex carbohydrates. Some fibers are soluble in water and others are insoluble. Both types of fiber are found in most plant foods and provide health benefits.

1. Soluble fiber forms a gel when mixed with liquid and becomes gummy or viscous. It is used in low fat and nonfat food to add texture and consistency.

**Sources:** Dried beans, oats, peas, barley, and some fruits (apples, citrus), and vegetables, such as carrots and potatoes. Psyllium, a grain that is found in some cereal products, dietary supplements, and bulk fiber laxatives, is also high in soluble fiber.

2. Insoluble fiber (roughage) gives structure to plant cell walls and passes through the digestive tract largely intact. Fiber moves waste through the intestinal tract but is not digested. Although it does not dissolve, insoluble fiber does hold on to water.

**Sources:** Whole wheat and wheat bran, corn bran, whole grains, cereals, seeds, vegetables, and skins of fruits and root vegetables such as potatoes.

## How Much Do I Need?

38 g daily for males <50 years

30 g daily for males >50 years

25 g for females <50 years

21 g for females >50 years

## Why is Fiber Important?

Diets low in saturated fat and cholesterol and high in fiber are associated with a reduced risk of certain cancers, diabetes, digestive disorders, and heart disease.

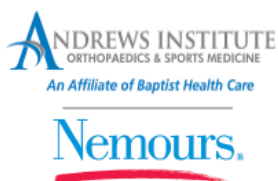
- **Cancer:** A high fiber diet is associated with a reduced risk of colon cancer. By moving waste through the colon, insoluble fiber decreases the time that potentially harmful substances are in contact with the intestinal lining.
- **Digestive disorders:** By adding bulk and softness to stools, insoluble fiber promotes regularity and helps prevent constipation. Insoluble fiber also plays a roll in reducing the risk, and alleviating the symptoms of diverticulosis (tiny outpouchings of the colon).
- **Diabetes:** Soluble fiber helps to regulate blood sugar by binding carbohydrates to slow their digestion and absorption. This may help prevent wide swings in blood sugar levels.
- **Heart Disease:** A diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, and high in fruits, vegetables and whole grains, can lower blood cholesterol. Pectin, a type of soluble fiber, binds bile acids in the digestive tract and removes them. The liver must break down cholesterol to make more bile acids, resulting in lower blood cholesterol levels.
- **Obesity:** Insoluble fiber is bulky, providing fewer calories because it passes through the body virtually intact. High fiber foods are generally more filling than low fiber foods.

## ADDING FIBER TO YOUR DIET

Increase fiber slowly in your diet to minimize bloating or cramping that may occur. It is also important to increase your intake of fluids as you add fiber because fiber tends to hold water.

A “good” fiber source has 2.5 grams per serving. A “high” fiber source has 5 grams per serving.

Fiber Sources					
Source	Serving Size	Fiber (g)	Source	Serving Size	Fiber (g)
<b>Fruit</b>			<b>Legumes</b>		
Pear, with skin	1 medium	5.5	Lentils	½ cup	8
Guava	½ cup	4.5	Split peas	½ cup	8
Mango	1 medium	4	Black beans	½ cup	7.5
Raspberries	½ cup	4	Pinto beans	½ cup	7.5
Blackberries	½ cup	4	Lima beans	½ cup	6.5
Apple, with skin	1 medium	4	Kidney beans	½ cup	6.5
Banana	1 medium	3	Garbanzo beans	½ cup	6
Orange	1 medium	3	Refried beans	½ cup	6
Kiwi	1 small	2	Baked beans	½ cup	5
Strawberries	½ cup	1			
<b>Vegetables</b>			<b>Cereals</b>		
Peas	½ cup	4.5	Fiber One, Original	½ cup	14
Potato with skin	1 medium	4	Kashi Go Lean	1¼ cup	13
Broccoli	½ cup	2.5	All Bran (Kellogg’s)	½ cup	10
Corn	½ cup	2	Bran flakes	¾ cup	5.5
Spinach	½ cup	2	Raisin Bran (Post)	½ cup	4
Carrot	1 medium	2	Oats (Old Fashioned)	½ cup, dry	4
Brussels sprouts	½ cup	2	Cheerios	½ cup	1.5
<b>Breads, Rice, and Pasta</b>			<b>Other Sources</b>		
Spaghetti, wheat, cooked	1 cup	6	Popcorn	3 cups	3.5
Barley, pearled, cooked	1 cup	6	Chia seeds	1 Tbsp	3.5
Quinoa, cooked	1 cup	5	Almonds	1 oz.	3.5
Oat bran muffin	3-inch	5	Pistachios	1 oz.	3
Whole wheat English muffin	3½-inch	4.5	Pecans	1 oz.	3
Whole wheat bagel	3½-inch	3.5	Peanuts	¼ cup	2.5
Rice, brown, cooked	1 cup	3.5	Hummus dip	¼ cup	2
Spaghetti, white, cooked	1 cup	2.5	Flaxseed, ground	1 Tbsp	2
Whole wheat bread	1 slice	2	Wheat germ	1 Tbsp	1
Rice, white, cooked	1 cup	0.5	Sunflower seeds	1 Tbsp	1



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