

# HIGH FIBER DIET

## Why should you eat a high fiber diet?

A high fiber diet can prevent, stop or even reverse some digestive tract problems. It has also been shown to reduce the risk of colon cancer. The major health organizations, including the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society, and the American Dietetic Association, recommend that individuals eat 25 to 35 grams of fiber per day.

## What is fiber?

Fiber is the part of whole grains, vegetables, and fruit that cannot be digested by the body. As fiber passes through the intestines, it absorbs large amounts of water. This results in softer and bulkier stools that can pass through the bowel more easily and quickly. A softer, larger stool helps prevent constipation and straining, which can help avoid or relieve hemorrhoids. More bulk means less pressure in the colon, and this is important in treating irritable bowel syndrome and diverticulosis.

## High Fiber Foods

### Whole Grains:

Whole wheat, bran, and other whole grains are present in a variety of breads and cereals. Look for the words “whole wheat” or “whole grain” in the list of ingredients. You cannot judge a bread by its color. Some manufacturers artificially color bread brown to make it look more wholesome.

### Dried Beans and Legumes:

Dried beans such as kidney, pinto, navy, and garbanzo beans, along with split peas are all very high fiber.

### Fruit:

Fiber is found in the skin and pulp of fruits. Fruit juices contain no fiber.

### Vegetables:

Raw vegetables tend to have a higher fiber content than cooked vegetables. Avoid overcooking vegetables to retain more fiber. High fiber vegetables choices include broccoli, carrots, and corn.

## Suggestions for Increasing Fiber:

Fiber can create an increase in gas and even cause mild cramping, so it is important to add it gradually to your intake. Remember to eat your food slowly, chew food thoroughly, and drink plenty of liquids. Record your intake for a week and tally up the amount of dietary fiber you consume. The fiber content of foods is listed on the food label, or check the attached chart. Remember to gradually increase the fiber in your diet to 25 to 35 grams per day.

## Fiber Content in Food (g = grams)

### Fruits

Apple	1	=	3 g
Blueberries	½ cup	=	3 g
Grapefruit	½	=	0.7g
Pear	1	=	4 g
Strawberries	1 cup	=	4 g

### Vegetables

Broccoli	½ cup	=	2 g
Carrots	1	=	2 g
Celery	1	=	0.6 g
Corn	½ cup	=	3 g
Green beans	½ cup	=	1 g
Peas	½ cup	=	2 g
Spinach	½ cup	=	2 g
Sweet potatoes	1	=	3 g

### Beans and Grains

Black-eyed peas	½ cup	=	4 g
Lima beans	½ cup	=	4 g
Kidney beans	½ cup	=	3 g
Brown rice	1 cup	=	3 g
Bran flakes	¾ cup	=	5 g
Whole-wheat bread	1 slice	=	2 g
White rice	1 cup	=	1 g

source: JA Tpennington, *Sixteenth Edition of Bowes and Church's Food Values of Portions Commonly Used*. J.B. Lippincott Publishing Co., Philadelphia, PA. 1994

### Two Sample High Fiber Days:

<u>Menu</u>	<u>Fiber</u>	<u>Menu</u>	<u>Fiber</u>
1½ cups Bran Flakes Cereal	10 g	1 English Muffin	1 g
1 cup fat-free milk	0	1 Tbsp peanut butter	1 g
1 cup strawberries	4 g	½ banana (slices)	1 g
1 slice whole wheat toast	2 g	1 cup fat-free milk	0 g
Jelly or margarine	0		
Turkey breast on	0	Garden salad with beans	
2 slices rye bread	2 g	2 cups lettuce	2 g
Lettuce and tomatoes	1 g	½ cup diced tomatoes	1 g
Mustard or mayonnaise	0	½ cup diced green pepper	1 g
1 medium raw carrot	3 g	1 medium raw carrot	3 g
Fresh apple	3 g	⅔ cup kidney beans	5 g
		Lite salad dressing	0 g
		7 reduced fat Triscuits	4 g
		1 fresh orange	2 g
Flank steak	0 g	Grilled salmon	0 g
Baked potato with skin	5 g	9 spears asparagus	3 g
Margarine or sour cream	0 g	1 cup brown rice	4 g
1 cup broccoli	5 g	1 fudgesicle	0 g
Frozen yogurt	0 g	1 raw peach	2 g
<b>total:</b>	<b>35 g</b>	<b>total:</b>	<b>30 g</b>