

Facts on Dietary Fibre

What is dietary fibre?

Fibre is a nutrient found only in plants such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, nut, seeds and legumes. Fibre provides structure in stems, leaves, roots, and skins of plants. They are the part of the plant that the body cannot fully digest.

Dietary fibre can be classified into two main groups: **water soluble and water insoluble**. Most plant foods have some of both types of fibre.

1. Water Soluble Fibre:

This type of fibre dissolves in water forming a gel that slows down the digestion of food. It makes stool softer to prevent constipation, and helps lower blood cholesterol, triglycerides, and blood sugar levels.

Good sources of water soluble fibre include: Oatmeal and oat bran, barley, beans, legumes, psyllium husk, and some vegetables and fruits.

2. Water Insoluble Fibre:

This type of fibre does not dissolve in water, but it is able to hold water making stool more bulky which helps to prevent constipation.

Good sources of water insoluble fibre include: All Bran Buds™, whole wheat and wheat bran, whole grains, nuts, and some fruits and vegetables.

Sources of Fibre

Good Sources of Fibre		Poor Sources of Fibre	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Berries • Prunes • Pears and apples (with the skin) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole grains • Legumes • Nuts and Seeds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat, fish, and poultry • Milk, cheese, and yogurt • Non-dairy milk alternatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oils and butter • Eggs

- **Very high source** of fibre has at least **6 grams** of fibre per serving
- **High source** of fibre has at least **4 grams** of fibre per serving
- **Source** of fibre has at least **2 grams** of fibre per serving

How much fibre do I need?

How much fibre you need depends on your age and gender.

Age	Women	Men
19-50	25g of fibre per day	38g of fibre per day
Over 50	21g of fibre per day	30g of fibre per day

The recommended amount of fibre is higher for people with diabetes. Men and women with diabetes should get 15-25g of fibre for every 1000 calories they eat.

Why is dietary fibre important?

Dietary fibre plays **MANY** beneficial roles in the body. Fibre can help:

- Keep the digestive system healthy by keeping bowel movements regular, preventing constipation and adding bulk to stool for ease of passage through lower gut.
- Lower fats in your blood, including total and LDL cholesterol, by reducing fat and cholesterol absorption
- Maintain a healthy weight by making you feel full longer, so you eat less
- Control blood glucose if you have diabetes by slowing down the digestion of foods that turn into sugar in the body
- Lower the risk of colon cancer, digestive problems, diverticulosis, hemorrhoids, and heart disease

Tips to Help Increase the Fibre in Your Diet

- Choose more whole grain bread, cereal, pastas and brown rice
- Try adding some wheat germ, ground flaxseed, chia seeds, or oat bran into your cereal, yogurt, applesauce, and baking
- Have oatmeal for breakfast made from steel cut oats
- Eat more whole fruits and vegetables and include the skins and membranes where possible
- Include legumes (cooked beans, peas, and lentils) in your diet on a regular basis. These can be eaten alone or added to salads, casseroles, or soups.
- Snack on some nuts such as almonds and peanuts
- If you are not able to get enough fibre from the foods you eat, you may be able to increase this using fibre supplements such as Metamucil. Follow the label of any supplements you take.

Note: When increasing the fibre in your diet, increase it slowly as this will help avoid intestinal discomfort as your body adjusts to the change. It is important to drink enough fluid, because fibre needs fluid to keep stools soft. Try drinking at least 6-8 cups of fluid each day, selecting water as your number one choice.