



## Fiber for Your Health

### What is Dietary Fiber?

Dietary fiber is a substance that cannot be used for energy by the body, but is necessary in other ways. There are two major types of dietary fiber, **soluble and insoluble**. The boxes below tell how each type of fiber helps keep us healthy. According to the Institute of Medicine, we should consume about 14 grams of fiber for every 1,000 calories we eat, every day. Fiber is found only in plant foods, not in meat or dairy foods.

#### Soluble Fiber

- May help decrease blood cholesterol
- May help control blood sugar levels

#### Good Sources

- Legumes, such as dried beans, peas, and lentils
- Oat products, such as oat bran and oatmeal
- Pectin-rich fruits such as apples, strawberries and citrus fruits
- Barley

#### Insoluble Fiber

- Helps prevent constipation, hemorrhoids, and other intestinal problems
- May lower the risk of some types of cancer
- Gives feeling of fullness

#### Good Sources

- Wheat bran and wheat bran cereals
- Whole grain foods, such as whole wheat bread
- Fruits and vegetables, including the skins and seeds

### Points to Remember

◆ **Increase fiber slowly.** Bloating, cramping, or gas may be noticed when fiber is added to the diet. Making small changes in your diet over a period of time can help prevent this.

◆ **Use fiber supplements only under your doctor's advice.** Some fiber supplements contain only small amounts of fiber and may not be as good for you as the fiber found in foods. Read the Nutrition Facts label.

◆ **Drink plenty of fluids.** If you don't already, drink 8 glasses of liquids a day. Drink at least two more glasses of water a day when you increase your fiber intake. Too little fluid can cause constipation.

◆ **Avoid too much fiber.** Too much fiber can affect your body's ability to absorb essential minerals such as calcium, iron, magnesium, zinc, and copper.

**Most Americans eat only about 10 grams of fiber a day, instead of the recommended 25 – 30 grams of fiber a day!**

### Fiber in Foods

Serving Size		Grams of Fiber
	<b>Breads, Cereals, Pastas</b>	
3 cups	Air-popped popcorn	4
1 medium	Bran muffin	3
2/3 cup	Brown rice	3
1 slice	Whole wheat bread	3
	<b>Cooked Legumes</b>	
½ cup	Baked beans	10
½ cup	Great northern beans	7
½ cup	Lima beans	7
	<b>Fruits</b>	
1 cup	raisins	6
3	Dried prunes	5
1 medium	Pear with skin	4
1 medium	Apple with skin	3
1 cup	strawberries	3
1 medium	banana	3
1 medium	orange	3
	<b>Vegetables</b>	
½ cup	Cooked frozen peas	4
1 medium	Baked potato w/ skin	4
½ cup	Brussels sprouts	3
½ cup	Cooked broccoli tops	3
½ cup	Cooked carrots	3
½ cup	Cooked corn	3

### Daily Fiber Tips

- Start your day with a fiber-rich cereal.** Oat bran, bran flakes, oatmeal, or one of the super high-fiber cereals. Mix a scoop of high-fiber cereal with one of your favorites. Eat dry cereal as a snack.
- Top your cereal** with a scoop of raisins, banana slices, or orange sections.
- Take a muffin** for lunch. Make it a bran or an oatmeal muffin. It is even better if it contains apples, apricots, or raisins.
- Add fiber to your salad** with carrots, apple, dried fruits, broccoli, cauliflower, chickpeas, and kidney beans.
- Choose WHOLE-grain breads.** Read the labels carefully.
- Add beans and peas to your meals.** Try split-pea soup or baked beans with a slice of whole-wheat bread and a glass of skim milk. Add beans or peas to casseroles, stir-fry meals, salads, rice, or noodles.
- Snack on high-fiber fruits.** Berries, pears, apples, oranges, and bananas.
- READ THE NUTRITION LABEL** to find the product's serving size and how much fiber is in each serving.