



## The Fiber Facts

### What is Fiber?

Fiber is the part of plant foods that can't be digested by the body. There are two types of fiber, soluble and insoluble, and both have unique functions in the body. Both types of fiber are found in dried beans, peas, and lentils.

**Soluble Fiber:** A type of dietary fiber that dissolves in water and thickens to form a gel.

- **What foods are good sources of soluble fiber?**

Apples	Dried Beans, Peas and Lentils	Barley	Figs
Oranges	Broccoli	Guava	Pears
Carrots	Oatmeal	Raisins	

- **What does soluble fiber do for me?**

It can play a role in reducing your risk of cardiovascular disease by binding cholesterol and taking it out of the body. This action seems to help lower blood cholesterol.

**Insoluble Fiber:** Commonly called "roughage". A type of dietary fiber that does not dissolve in water, but actually holds onto water. Which helps to soften stools and speed up elimination of waste from the bowel.

- **What foods are good sources of insoluble fiber?**

Whole wheat bread	Corn	Cauliflower
Potatoes with skin	Fruits & vegetables with skins	Brussels sprouts
Bran cereals	Wheat Chex <sup>®</sup>	Seeds and nuts
Dried beans, peas, and lentils		

- **What does insoluble fiber do for me?**

Serves as "nature's broom" by adding bulk and softness to stools, promoting regularity and preventing constipation. Through this action, insoluble fiber decreases the time potentially harmful waste products stay in the intestines.

### What are the benefits of fiber?

- Most foods with significant amounts of fiber are full of nutrients. For example, legumes and whole wheat products are packed with essential vitamins and minerals. Fruits and vegetables provide many antioxidants which may help protect against some types of cancer.
- Soft, regular stools due to a high fiber diet, decrease your chance of diverticulosis, hemorrhoids and constipation.
- Fiber may help you maintain a healthy weight. Fiber-rich foods usually take longer to chew, can make you feel full longer, and are lower in fat.

## How can I include more fiber in my diet?

- Choose fiber-rich cold cereals, oatmeal, bran muffins or buckwheat pancakes for breakfast. Try adding wheat germ or Grapenuts® to yogurt. Select fresh fruit which provides more fiber than juice or canned fruit.
- Use whole grain breads which can add a rich nutty flavor to your sandwiches.
- Add cooked beans, peas and lentils, or barley to soups or casseroles for exciting new flavors. There are over ten different beans, each with great and unique flavors. Try to eat at least three servings per week.
- Keep peels on fruits and vegetables. In addition to fiber there are a lot of nutrients in the peel. Be sure to wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly before eating.
- Mix dried fruit into breads, cookies, salads and other dishes. Try some apricots, cranberries, currants, dates, figs, prunes and raisins.
- Add bran or oatmeal to casseroles or meatloaf instead of plain bread or cracker crumbs.
- Substitute whole wheat flour for half of the white flour when making breads, muffins, pancakes, waffles and other grain products,
- Try bulgur, millet, or wheat berries in casseroles or as side dishes in place of pasta or rice.
- Substitute brown or wild rice for white rice or use a combination.
- Eating whole grain pasta can add over 5 grams of fiber per serving to your meals.
- Select high fiber snacks such as Cheerios®, Oatmeal Squares® or an apple.

## Points to Remember!

- Increase fiber gradually with a goal of 20 - 35 grams daily. Try increasing fiber by 3 - 5 grams for a week or two. Continue increasing fiber until you reach your goal.
- Drink 6 - 8 cups of fluids daily to prevent constipation.
- Include fiber from a variety of sources. Remember, fiber-rich foods are good sources of the vitamins and minerals we need for daily body maintenance.
- Eating greater than 50 grams of fiber per day, on a consistent basis, can lead to nutrient malabsorption, especially in children.

## Sample Menu: 25 grams of Fiber

### Breakfast

3/4 cup Raisin Bran®-3g  
1 cup Skim Milk-0g  
1 medium Banana-3g

### Snack

1 medium Apple or Orange-4g

### Lunch

2 slices Whole Wheat Bread-4g  
3 oz Lean Turkey Breast-0g  
1 slice Low-fat Cheese-0g  
2 slices of Tomato-0g  
1 leaf Romaine Lettuce-0g  
1/2 cup Baked Beans-6g  
1 cup Skim Milk-0g

### Dinner

3 oz Grilled or Baked Skinless,  
Boneless Chicken Breast-0g  
(Flavor with garlic and  
oregano or rosemary)  
1/2 cup Angel Hair Pasta-1g  
1 oz Parmesan Cheese-0g  
1/2 cup Frozen Peas & Carrots-3g  
1/2 canned Fruit Cocktail-1g

\*\*\*Information adapted from *The ADA Complete Food and Nutrition Guide*, Duyff RL, ...

For more information or to speak with a Registered, Licensed Dietitian, call the OSF Saint Francis Nutrition Access Line at (309)655-3705

Form No.113-2087