



Planning Meals: Fibre Facts

Dietary fibre is the part of plant material that humans cannot digest. The fibre is found in foods such as nuts, seeds, legumes (dry beans, peas and lentils), fruits, vegetables and whole grain breads and cereals.

A diet high in fibre, along with exercise and regular eating habits, will help you maintain healthy bowels. Fibre helps prevent constipation by adding bulk and absorbing water, thus softening the stool. High fibre diets may also help prevent and treat a variety of diseases and conditions, including heart disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity.

Follow Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating to choose foods that are higher in fibre. Small changes can add up to a big difference in your fibre intake. (For more information on using Canada's Food Guide, pick up a copy of Senior Friendly Ideas for Healthy Eating 1.)

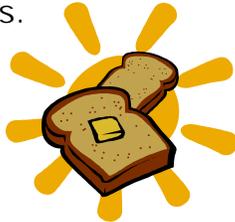
Best sources of fibre

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| Grain products | <ul style="list-style-type: none">☼ Whole grain breads, e.g. 100 per cent whole wheat, cracked wheat, multigrain or dark rye bread.☼ Whole grain cereals, e.g. oatmeal, cracked wheat, shredded wheat, oatbran, granola, or any cereal containing bran.☼ Whole grain crackers, muffins and cookies, e.g. whole wheat, rye or graham crackers, bran muffins, cornmeal muffins, oatmeal cookies, fig newtons, date squares.☼ Brown or wild rice, barley, bulgur, wheat germ.☼ Whole wheat macaroni or spaghetti. |
| Vegetables and fruits | <ul style="list-style-type: none">☼ Fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruits and vegetables, especially those with edible seeds or skins, e.g. potatoes with skin, broccoli, corn, peas, raspberries, strawberries, blueberries, pears, apples, prunes, dates, figs, dried apricots or raisins. |
| Meats and alternatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none">☼ Cooked dried peas, beans and lentils, e.g. kidney beans, soybeans, black beans, chick peas, yellow or split peas.☼ Nuts and seeds, e.g. peanuts, almonds, cashews, flax. |
| Milk products | <ul style="list-style-type: none">☼ Although not a source of fibre, milk products are an important part of a healthy diet. |

High fibre menu ideas

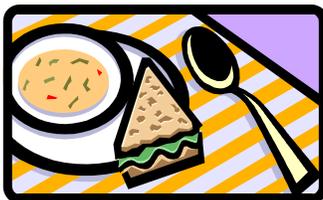
Breakfast

- ⚙ High fibre cereals such as bran cereals, shredded wheat, cooked oatmeal, etc. or a scoop of high fibre cereal mixed with one of your favourites.
- ⚙ Cereals topped with raisins, flax seeds, sliced banana or a handful of frozen or fresh blueberries.
- ⚙ Whole wheat toast with peanut butter.
- ⚙ Whole fruit instead of juice.
- ⚙ Stewed prunes.
- ⚙ Pancakes made with whole wheat flour and added flax seed.



Lunch

- ⚙ Hearty soups made with dried peas, beans, lentils or barley (e.g. split pea, minestrone).



- ⚙ Sandwiches made with whole wheat, multigrain or dark rye bread.
- ⚙ Green salad sprinkled with sunflower seeds, almonds or additional fruits or vegetables such as shredded carrot, sliced cucumber, oranges, strawberries.
- ⚙ Salads such as marinated bean, spinach or carrot and raisin salad.
- ⚙ Muffins made with whole wheat flour and added raisins, figs or dates.

Supper

- ⚙ Baked beans or chili.
- ⚙ Casseroles with added beans, lentils, barley and vegetables and a handful of raw bran.
- ⚙ Baked potato in skin, or brown or wild rice.
- ⚙ Meat loaf or meatballs with added raw bran.

Tips for Staying Regular

- ⚙ Eat regular meals and snacks.
- ⚙ Increase your fibre gradually, to minimize stomach bloating and gas. Your body will adapt to a higher fibre diet and any bloating or gas that you experience will disappear.
- ⚙ Drink at least eight glasses of fluids each day. Fluids include water, juice, milk, soup, herbal teas, decaffeinated coffee or tea.
- ⚙ Exercise regularly. Even a short, daily walk is a good idea.
- ⚙ Avoid laxatives unless your doctor has prescribed them. Laxative overdose may cause a lazy bowel that worsens constipation.

Adapted from Calgary Regional Health Authority, Mistahia Health Region, Edmonton Board of Health.

