

Fiber Facts

Is Fiber Important?

YES! Soluble fiber can help lower blood cholesterol and may reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke. You can get soluble fiber from oat bran, oatmeal, apples, pears, oranges, grapefruit, cabbage, green peas, corn and legumes (dry beans, lentils or peas). Insoluble fiber provides the “bulk” needed for proper functioning of the stomach and intestines. It promotes healthy intestinal action and prevents constipation and intestinal disease. You can get insoluble fiber from whole grain breads and cereals. Examples include 100% whole wheat bread and 100% bran flakes, fruit with edible peels or seeds, and vegetables.

Recommended Intake

The fiber recommendation for adults is 25 to 30 grams of total fiber (both soluble and insoluble) per day. A child’s need for fiber is based on age: 10 grams plus the child’s age. For example, an 8-year-old child would need (10 grams + 8 years) = 18 grams per day.

Sources of Fiber

To become familiar with the amount of fiber in foods, begin by looking at the Nutrition Facts label. Fiber is listed as Dietary Fiber, and the amount is given in grams (g) and Percent Daily Value. Nutrition facts labels list percentages that are based on recommended daily allowances - meaning the amount of nutrients a person should get each day. These numbers tell you the Percent Daily Value that one serving of this food provides as a percentage of established standards. For example, a label may show that a serving of the food provides 30 percent of the daily recommended amount of fiber. This means you still need another 70 percent to meet the recommended goal. Percent Daily Value is based on a 2,000-calorie diet for adults older than 18. The recommended daily allowance for fiber for adults is 25 grams.¹ Whole grains are a great source of fiber, and are infinitely better than refined grains from a nutritional standpoint. Please refer to the table of fiber-containing foods² on the following page.



¹ Mayo Clinic.com, <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/food-and-nutrition/AN00284>, Ask a Food and Nutrition Specialist, *Percent Daily Value: What Does it Mean?*

² USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 18. Fiber, Total Dietary (g) Content of Selected Foods per Common Measure, sorted by nutrient content.

Foods Containing Fiber

Fruits	Serving size	Total Fiber (grams)
Pear	1 medium	5.1
Blueberries	1 cup	3.5
Apple, with skin	1 medium	3.3
Strawberries	1 cup	3.3
Orange	1 medium	3.1
Banana	1 medium	3.0
Apricots, dried	10 halves	2.6
Raisins	¼ cup	1.5
Grains and Pasta	Serving size	Total Fiber (grams)
Whole wheat flour	1 cup	14.6
Spaghetti, whole-wheat	1 cup	6.3
Whole wheat bagel	2 oz	6.0
Whole wheat English Muffin	1 each	4.4
Whole wheat bread	1 slice	1.9
Breakfast Cereals	Serving Size	Total Fiber (grams)
Raisin bran	1 oz (¾ cup)	5.4
Bran flakes	1 oz (¾ cup)	5.1
Oatmeal	1 cup	4.0
Frosted Mini Wheats©	1 oz (¾ cup)	3.8
Wheaties©	1 oz (¾ cup)	2.2
Cheerios©	1 oz (¾ cup)	1.8
Legumes, Nuts and Seeds	Serving Size	Total Fiber (grams)
Lentils	1 cup	15.6
Black beans	1 cup	15.0
Lima beans	1 cup	13.2
Baked beans, canned	1 cup	10.4
Almonds	24 nuts	3.3
Peanuts	28 nuts	2.3
Vegetables	Serving size	Total Fiber (grams)
Peas	1 cup	8.8
Potato, baked with skin	1 medium	4.4
Corn	1 cup	4.2
Popcorn, air-popped	3 cups	3.6
Tomato paste	¼ cup	3.0
Carrot	1 medium	2.0

Increase Fiber in School Meals

At Breakfast

- Serve oatmeal (a whole grain) one or more times per week.
- Serve kid-friendly, high-fiber breakfast cereals: Cheerios®, Frosted Mini Wheats®, Raisin Bran®, oatmeal or Cream of Wheat®.
- Opt for whole wheat or other whole-grain cereals that list ingredients such as whole wheat or oats as one of the first 2-3 items on the ingredient list. Many popular cereals are made with whole grains, but try to choose ones that have less sugar than some of the excessively sweet whole-grain cereal offerings such as Trix®, Lucky Charms®, Cinnamon Toast Crunch®, etc.
- Make pancakes with whole grain (or buckwheat) pancake mix and top with apples, berries, or raisins.
- Serve bran or whole grain waffles topped with fruit.
- Offer whole wheat bagels or English muffins, instead of white toast.
- Top fiber-rich cereal with apples, oranges, berries, or bananas. Add almonds (or other nuts) to pack an even greater fiber punch.



At Lunch

- Try whole wheat flour, or half white and half whole wheat in baking. Use oatmeal, oat bran, or rye to replace some of the white flour in breads, muffins and quick breads.
- Add beans, peas, or lentils (legumes) to main dishes. Choose a legume-based dish instead of a meat, poultry or cheese dish at least once a week.
- Serve whole fruits and vegetables (with the peel when appropriate).
- Add dried beans to soups. Add lentils or bulgur to hamburger dishes.
- Serve whole wheat tortillas instead of those made with enriched white flour.
- Purchase and serve whole grain bread products such as dinner rolls, sandwich bread, burger buns, etc.
- Introduce your students to whole grain pasta and brown rice.

