



The Importance of Fiber and Where to Get it

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There are many components of a healthy diet: Complex carbohydrates that offer fuel [without spiking blood sugar](#), fresh fruits and veggies that offer important vitamins and minerals, and proper hydration with clean, filtered water.

But there is an equally vital component to health and that is ingesting an adequate amount of fiber.

Why is Fiber So Important?

Fiber is not just important for optimum health, it is essential for proper function of your digestive system as well. Without adequate fiber, your body cannot rid itself of toxins that build up in the intestines and bowels. And yet, most Americans do not eat anywhere near enough fiber.

But what is it exactly? Fiber is a type of carbohydrate that passes through the digestive system without being digested. There are two types of fiber: soluble and insoluble. Insoluble fiber prevents constipation by fermenting. The process of fermentation creates bacteria which makes the fiber very bulky.

Soluble fiber absorbs water and helps waste move more quickly through the digestive tract. While both kinds of fiber are beneficial, it is soluble fiber which is

related to lowering cholesterol levels and slowing digestion, thereby controlling hunger.

If you want to feel fuller longer (so you don't snack on unhealthy foods) while lowering your cholesterol naturally and keeping your gut working properly, you've got to eat more fiber!

The Harvard School of Health [recommends](#) that individuals eat approximately 14 grams of fiber for every 1000 calories eaten. Thanks to the typical American diet, which is high in processed foods and white flour, you might not be getting the recommended daily intake.

Here are foods you can incorporate into your current diet to boost your fiber intake:

Beans

Beans are one of the best sources of fiber. Stock up on lentils, chick peas, and black beans for a delicious and versatile way to keep your digestive system healthy. You can easily add them to salads, spice for a nice side dish, or make a chip dip.

Raw Fruit

Fruit is an excellent source of fiber, particularly when eaten with peels and skins on. And, when you consider the variety of vitamins and minerals found in fruit, you realize what a perfect snack it is.

Want to add more fruit to your diet? Make a fruit salad for lunch, or just throw an apple or banana into your purse (okay, maybe gently place the banana in there!). Also, consider making a fruit plate for your family for dessert – how Eurochic!

Vegetables

You know you should be eating more veggies. Not only are they packed with vitamins and minerals, they are also high in necessary fiber. Veggies such as avocado, artichokes and tomatoes contain particularly high amounts of fiber and are versatile enough to add to soups and salads.

Seeds and Nuts

Almonds, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds and walnuts (among other delicious seeds and nuts) are not only excellent sources of fiber but also healthy fat. So, start snacking on this superfood today.

Grains

Yes, grains can be healthy for you and offer tons of fiber when they are in their whole form, such as brown rice and whole wheat. So, avoid their white processed alternatives and opt for wheat and multigrain breads and cereals. Also consider eating more oatmeal and adding barley to your soups.

Popcorn

Did you know that just three cups of popcorn contain 2 grams of fiber? But understand that all of the health benefits go out the window when you buy microwave popcorn that is loaded with chemicals, or worse, that stuff at the movie theater they call popcorn with “butter.” Best to pick up some Non-GMO corn kernels and pop your own at home. You can add some fun spices or a little parmesan cheese to make it healthy and delicious.

Fiber Tips

Hopefully after reading this article you are going to consciously add fiber to your diet. But there are a few things you should consider:

- 1) When increasing your intake of fiber, it is important to do it slowly while at the same time increasing your water intake to avoid abdominal discomfort and constipation. Always remember you need to balance your fiber and water intake to keep things moving smoothly. Too much of anything, even fiber, is never a good thing.
- 2) As I mentioned a bit earlier, to get the most fiber, it's best not to peel your fruits or veggies. However, when eating the peels, it's best to buy organic produce. If you cannot afford organic produce or your local grocery store does not offer much in that department, then you may have to peel, as the outside of the fruits and veggies will have come into contact with pesticides that are hard to wash off.
- 3) Make your own healthy high-fiber snacks. Trail mixes with a variety of nuts and seeds and some dried fruits such as cranberries or raisins are great for you and your kids. Remember to pop your own popcorn and have fun spicing it.

Hopefully you understand the importance of fiber when it comes to gut health and your overall health.

And speaking of gut health and overall health, besides adequate fiber intake, one of the best ways to establish and support a healthy gut microbiome is by adding resistant starch to your diet. Disturbances to the gut's microbiome have been linked to obesity, inflammatory bowel disease, and even depression and anxiety.