



# Eating a High-Fiber Diet

Fiber is what gives strength and structure to plants. Most grains, beans, vegetables, and fruits contain fiber. Foods rich in fiber are often low in calories and fat, and they fill you up more. They may also reduce your risks for certain health problems. To find out the amount of fiber in canned, packaged, or frozen foods, read the Nutrition Facts label. It tells you how much fiber is in one serving.

## Types of fiber and their benefits

There are two types of fiber: insoluble and soluble. They both aid digestion and help you maintain a healthy weight.

- **Insoluble fiber.** This is found in whole grains, cereals, certain fruits and vegetables such as apple skin, corn, and carrots. Insoluble fiber may prevent constipation and reduce the risk for certain types of cancer. It's called insoluble because it doesn't dissolve in water.
- **Soluble fiber.** This type of fiber is in oats, beans, and certain fruits and vegetables such as strawberries and peas. Soluble fiber can reduce cholesterol, which may help lower the risk for heart disease. It also helps control blood sugar levels.

A serving size tells you how much of a food or a liquid is in 1 serving.

This number tells you how many grams (g) of fiber are in 1 serving.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size ½ cup (130g)	
Serving Per Can 3½	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 140	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 0.5g	<b>1%</b>
Saturated Fat 0g	<b>0%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 510g	<b>21%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrates</b> 28g	<b>9%</b>
<b>Dietary Fiber</b> 6g	<b>24%</b>
Sugars 11g	
<b>Protein</b> 6g	
Vitamin A 2%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 6%	Iron 10%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	

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## Look for high-fiber foods

Try these foods to add fiber to your diet:

- **Whole-grain breads and cereals.** Try to eat 6 to 8 ounces a day. Include wheat and oat bran cereals, whole-wheat muffins or toast, and corn tortillas in your meals.
- **Fruits.** Try to eat 2 cups a day. Apples, oranges, strawberries, pears, and bananas are good sources. (Note: Fruit juice is low in fiber.)
- **Vegetables.** Try to eat at least 2.5 cups a day. Add asparagus, carrots, broccoli, peas, and corn to your meals.
- **Beans.** One cup of cooked lentils gives you over 15 grams of fiber. Try navy beans, lentils, and chickpeas.
- **Seeds.** A small handful of seeds gives you about 3 grams of fiber. Try sunflower or chia seeds.

## Keep track of your fiber

Keep track of how much fiber you eat. Start by reading food labels. Then eat a variety of foods high in fiber. As you start to eat more fiber, ask your healthcare provider how much water you should be drinking to keep your digestive system working smoothly.

Aim for a certain amount of fiber in your diet each day. The daily value for fiber is 25 grams a day. But some experts advise that women under 50 eat 25 to 28 grams per day and that men under 50 eat 30 to 38 grams per day. After age 50, your daily fiber needs drop to 22 grams for women and 28 grams for men.

Before you reach for the fiber supplements, think about this. Fiber is found naturally in healthy whole foods. It gives you that feeling of fullness after you eat. Taking fiber supplements or eating fiber-enriched foods will not give you this full feeling.

Your fiber intake is a good measure for the quality of your overall diet. If you are missing out on your daily amount of fiber, you may be lacking other important nutrients as well.

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