



The Importance of Dietary Fiber

Fiber (also called roughage or bulk) promotes the wavelike contractions that keep food moving through the intestine. This eases the passage of waste. Fibrous substances pass through the intestine undigested. They also absorb many times their weight in water, resulting in softer, bulkier stools. A high fiber diet causes a large, soft, bulky stool that passes through the bowel easily and quickly. A softer, larger stool helps prevent constipation and straining. More bulk means less pressure in the colon, which is important in the treatment of irritable bowel syndrome and diverticulosis.

Insoluble Fiber is found in wheat, rye, bran, and other grains. It is also the fiber found in most vegetables. Insoluble fiber means that it does not dissolve in water. It also cannot be used by intestinal or colon bacteria as a food source, thus it produces less gas.

Soluble Fiber dissolves in water forming a gelatinous substance in the bowel. Soluble fiber is found in oatmeal, oat bran, fruit, psyllium (Metamucil, Konsyl), barley, and legumes. Soluble fiber seems to bind up cholesterol allowing it to be eliminated with the stool. It can be metabolized by gas forming bacteria in the colon.

FIBER CONTENTS OF FOODS (goal 20 to 30 grams of fiber per day)

FOOD	SERVING SIZE	FIBER (grams)	FOOD	SERVING SIZE	FIBER (grams)	FOOD	SERVING SIZE	FIBER (grams)
Fruits			Asparagus	½ cup	1.0	Raw Vegetables		
Apple with skin	1	3.5	Beans (string)	½ cup	1.6	Bean sprouts	½ cup	1.5
Apple w/o skin	1	2.7	Broccoli	½ cup	2.2	Celery	½ cup	1.1
Apricot	1	0.6	Brussel sprouts	½ cup	2.3	Cucumber	½ cup	0.4
Apricot, dried	5 halves	1.4	Cabbage	½ cup	1.4	Lettuce	1 cup	1.0
Banana	1	2.4	Carrots	½ cup	2.3	Mushrooms	½ cup	1.0
Blueberries	½ cup	2.0	Cauliflower	½ cup	1.1	Onions	½ cup	0.8
Cantaloupe	¼ melon	1.0	Corn, canned	½ cup	2.9	Peppers	½ cup	0.5
Cherries	10	1.2	Kale leaves	½ cup	1.4	Spinach	1 cup	1.2
Dates	3	1.9	Peas	½ cup	3.6	Tomato	1	1.5
Grapefruit	½	1.6	Potato with skin	1	2.5	Juices		
Grapes	20	0.6	Potato w/o skin	1	1.4	Apple	1 cup	0.8
Orange	1	2.6	Spinach	½ cup	2.1	Grapefruit	1 cup	1.0
Peach with skin	1	1.9	Squash	½ cup	1.4	Orange	1 cup	1.0
Peach w/o skin	1	1.2	Sweet potato	1	3.4	Breads, Pasta, Rice		
Pear with skin	½ large	3.1	Turnip	1/2	1.6	White bread	1 slice	0.4
Pear w/o skin	½ large	2.5	Zucchini	½ cup	1.8	Wheat bread	1 slice	1.4
Pineapple	½ cup	1.1	Legumes			Bagel	1	0.6
Plums, damson	5	0.9	Baked beans	½ cup	8.9	Rice, white	1 cup	0.4
Prunes	1	1.0	Dried beans	½ cup	4.7	Rice, brown	1 cup	2.0
Raisins	¼ cup	3.1	Kidney beans	½ cup	7.3	Macaroni	1 cup	1.0
Raspberries	½ cup	3.1	Lentils, cooked	½ cup	3.7	Nuts		
Strawberries	1 cup	3.0	Lima beans	½ cup	4.5	Almonds	10 nuts	1.1
Watermelon	1 cup	0.4	Navy beans	½ cup	6.0	Peanuts	10 nuts	1.4

Remember to drink plenty of fluids (goal 64 ounces of non-caffeinated, non-alcoholic beverage per day).