

High-Fiber Eating Plan

Fruits and vegetables contain dietary fiber that can improve almost anyone's health. If you have — or are at risk for — certain medical conditions, a high-fiber eating plan can be very important for your health.

What is dietary fiber?

Dietary fiber is the part of foods your body can't digest. Other parts of your food, such as fats, proteins, and carbohydrates, are broken down and absorbed. Fiber passes through your body mostly unchanged. It doesn't provide calories or vitamins. But it does provide a lot of health benefits.

Fiber falls into 2 categories:

- 1 Soluble fiber** dissolves in water and is found in oats, peas, beans, barley, and many fruits.
- 2 Insoluble fiber** does not dissolve in water and is found in whole-grain products, bran, nuts, and many vegetables.

All plant foods contain both types of fiber, some more of one type than the other. For the most benefit, eat a wide variety of high-fiber foods.



What are the benefits?

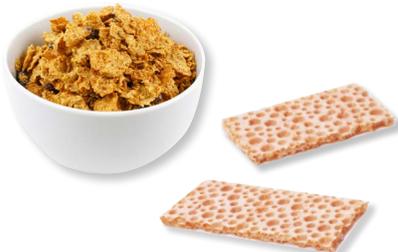
A high-fiber eating plan can help:

- **Decrease constipation and other digestive problems.** Insoluble fiber helps soften your stool (poop) and move food through your body more quickly. This puts less pressure on your colon and decreases your risk of digestive conditions such as hemorrhoids, irritable bowel syndrome, and diverticulosis.
- **Lower blood cholesterol and reduce your risk of heart disease.** Soluble fiber limits the amount of cholesterol your body can absorb. Especially if you already have high cholesterol, fiber can lower your levels of LDL (bad) cholesterol.

- **Prevent or manage diabetes.** Soluble fiber can slow the rate at which your body absorbs sugar and reduce your risk of developing type 2 diabetes. For people with diabetes, fiber can improve blood glucose levels.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** High-fiber foods tend to make you feel more full for a longer time with fewer calories for the same amount of food.

It is uncertain whether a high-fiber eating plan reduces the risk of colorectal cancer. If you're concerned about colorectal cancer, it's best to get screened for it regularly. People over age 50 should have a colonoscopy every 5 to 10 years.

Good choices for a high-fiber eating plan

Food	Fiber content	
<p>Beans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kidney beans, cooked, ½ cup • Split peas, cooked, ½ cup • Lentils, cooked, ½ cup • Pinto beans, cooked, ½ cup • Black beans, cooked, ½ cup 	<p>8 grams</p> <p>8 grams</p> <p>8 grams</p> <p>8 grams</p> <p>7 grams</p>	
<p>Grains</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% Bran cereal, ½ cup • Rye crackers, 2 • Whole-wheat English muffin, 1 • Whole-wheat pasta, 1 cup • Shredded wheat cereal, ½ cup 	<p>9 grams</p> <p>5 grams</p> <p>4 grams</p> <p>6 grams</p> <p>3 grams</p>	
<p>Fruits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pear, raw, 1 • Raspberries, raw, ½ cup • Apple with skin, raw • Banana • Orange 	<p>4 grams</p> <p>4 grams</p> <p>3 grams</p> <p>3 grams</p> <p>3 grams</p>	
<p>Vegetables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweet potato, baked, with skin • Green peas, ½ cup • Potato, baked, with skin • Spinach, frozen, cooked, ½ cup • Broccoli, cooked, ½ cup 	<p>5 grams</p> <p>4 grams</p> <p>4 grams</p> <p>4 grams</p> <p>3 grams</p>	
<p>Nuts and seeds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Popcorn, air popped, 3 cups • Almonds, 1 ounce • Peanuts, dry roasted, ¼ cup 	<p>4 grams</p> <p>3 grams</p> <p>2 grams</p>	

