

HIGH-FIBER DIET

WHAT IS FIBER?

Food fiber consists of those parts of plant cells that cannot be digested. Fiber surrounds the cells walls of plants, providing support and protection. When we eat fresh fruits, vegetables, or whole grains, this fiber passes through the digestive system relatively unchanged.

WHAT IS THE VALUE OF FIBER IN THE DIET?

In the large intestines fiber absorbs water and swells, leading to soft, bulky stools. People on a high-fiber diet seldom complain of constipation. Fiber increases the speed of material through the colon, therefore reducing the opportunity for harmful effects from drugs, food additives, chemicals, and other toxic materials. A high-fiber diet has been successful in treating childhood irritable bowel syndrome.

WHAT FOODS DOES A HIGH FIBER DIET INCLUDE?

The emphasis is on foods high in fiber such as whole grains, coarse, fibrous foods, raw fruits, and vegetables. To obtain the maximum benefits from a high-fiber diet, a variety of fiber foods should be eaten.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER:

1. Breakfast should ALWAYS include a high fiber cereal (at least 5 grams, preferably 8 to 9).
2. Throughout the day try to include 1-2 servings of fresh fruits and 1-2 servings of vegetables.
3. Substitute whole grain breads for white breads.
4. Use bran muffins or bran cookies for desserts.
5. Foods from the milk, cheese, and meat group have no fiber at all.

SAMPLE MENU

- **Breakfast:** Bran cereal, Milk, Banana
- **Lunch:** Apple, Turkey Sandwich (2 slices of wheat bread), Drink
- **Dinner:** Roast, Carrots, Greenbeans, Bran Muffins

Below is a listing of the dietary fiber content of various foods.

VEGETABLES	Serving size	Fiber (grams)
Asparagus	½ Cup	1.1
Broccoli	½ Cup	3.2
Carrots	½ Cup	2.3
Green beans	½ Cup	2.0
Beets	½ Cup	2.1
Cabbage	½ Cup	2.3
Okra	½ Cup	2.6
Spinach	½ Cup	5.7

FRUIT	Serving size	Fiber (grams)
Apple with peel	1 medium	3.3
Banana	½ small	1.6
Grapefruit	½	0.6
Peach (fresh)	1 small	1.4
Pear (fresh)	1 small	2.6
Prune (uncooked)	½ cup	7.8
Raspberries	½ cup	4.6

BREAD	Serving size	Fiber (grams)
Bran Muffins	1	3.2
Wheat Bread	1 slice	2.1
White Bread	1 slice	0.8

CEREAL: The majority of cereals are very low in fiber content.

All Bran	1/3 cup	9.0
Bran Buds	1/3 cup	8.0
Cracklin' Bran	1/3 cup	4.0
Most	3/4 cup	4.0
Bran Chex	2/3 cup	5.0

STARCHY VEGETABLES	Serving size	Fiber (grams)
Baked Beans	1/2 cup	11.0
Corn	1/3 cup	3.1
Rice	1/2 cup	0.8

MISCELLANEOUS	Serving size	Fiber (grams)
Peanut Butter (Smooth)	2 Tbsp	2.4
Peanuts (Roasted)	1/4 cup	2.9
Natural Bran	1 Tbsp.	3.0