

Colon and Rectal Surgery

High Fiber Diet

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What is dietary fiber?

Dietary fiber is the part of foods your body can't digest. Other parts of your food 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: those that do not dissolve in water (insoluble fiber) and those that do (soluble fiber).

Insoluble fiber

This type of fiber increases the movement of material through your digestive system and increases stool bulk, so it can be of benefit to those who struggle with constipation or irregular stools. Whole wheat flour, wheat bran, nuts and many other vegetables are a good source of fiber.

Soluble fiber

This type of fiber dissolves in water to form a gel like material. It can help lower blood cholesterol and glucose levels. You can find generous quantities in oats, peas, beans, apples, citrus fruits, carrots, barley and psyllium.

How does it work?

Dietary fiber increases the weight and size of your stools and softens it. A bulky stool is easier to pass, decreasing the chance of constipation. If you have loose, watery stools, fiber may also help to solidify the stool because it absorbs water and adds bulk to stool. A high-fiber diet may lower your risk of specific disorders, such as hemorrhoids, irritable bowel syndromes, and the development of small pouches in your colon (diverticular disease).

How much fiber do I need to eat?

How much fiber should I eat each day? Recommendations are 25-35 grams for adults up to age 50 and 20-30 grams for adults over 50. Gradually increase the fiber in your diet to avoid gastric distress. Drink plenty of water, 8 cups per day, to avoid constipation.

How do I increase fiber in my diet?

- Choose whole grain or high fiber breakfast cereals, like oatmeal, bran flakes, raisin bran, or wheat flakes. Look for 5 or more grams of fiber per serving.
- Switch to whole grain breads, pastas, and rice.
- Pack in more fruits by adding them to your cereal, yogurt, salads, or by making them a dessert.
- Snack on cut up vegetables. Grocery stores offer many pre-cut selections.
- Add beans, peas, and lentils to your diet by putting them in soups, salads, or side dishes.
- Read the labels. Pay attention to the amount of fiber per serving size on all packaged foods.

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Beans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kidney beans, cooked, ½ cup Split pea, cooked, ½ cup Lentils, cooked, ½ cup Pinto beans, cooked, ½ cup Black beans, cooked, ½ cup 	8 grams 8 grams 8 grams 8 grams 7 grams	
Grains <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 	9 grams 5 grams 4 grams 6 grams 3 grams	
Fruits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pear, raw, 1 Raspberries, raw, ½ cup Apple with skin, raw Banana Orange 	5 grams 4 grams 3 grams 3 grams 3 grams	
Vegetables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sweet potato, baked, with skin Green peas, ½ cup Potatoes, baked, with skin Spinach, frozen, cooled, ½ cup Broccoli, cooked, ½ cup 	5 grams 4 grams 4 grams 4 grams 3 grams	
Nuts and Seeds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Popcorn, air popped, 3 cups Almonds, 1 ounce Peanuts, dry roasted, ¼ cup 	4 grams 3 grams 2 grams	