

Dietary Fibre

What is Fibre?

Fibre (or 'roughage') is an essential part of a healthy diet. All plant-based foods contain fibre but some have more than others.

Food sources

There are two types of fibre – soluble and insoluble fibre. Both have health benefits and many foods contain a mixture of both.

Insoluble fibre

This type of fibre may help to keep your bowels 'regular'. Good sources of insoluble fibre include:

- Wholegrain breakfast cereals or cereal bars e.g. Bran flakes, Weetabix or Shredded Wheat
- Wholemeal and wholegrain bread, pitta, crackers or tortilla
- Wholewheat (brown) rice or pasta
- Buckwheat, quinoa or couscous
- Vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage and green beans
- Unpeeled fruit and vegetables
- Nuts or peanut butter

Soluble fibre

This type of fibre may help to reduce the amount of cholesterol in your blood.

If you have constipation, then increasing the amount of soluble fibre that you eat may help.

Good sources of soluble fibre include:

- Lentils and pulses (e.g. baked beans, kidney beans, lentils and chickpeas).
- Oats
- Golden linseeds
- Fruit such as bananas, apples, pears, nectarines and strawberries
- Vegetables such as potatoes, carrots, butternut squash, parsnip, turnip, cabbage, broccoli or cucumber.

Why do I need fibre?

Both types of fibre are important to keep your body healthy and your digestive system functioning properly.

Recognised health benefits of dietary fibre may include:

- Keeping you feeling fuller for longer. This can help you to control your weight.
- Helping to control your blood sugar which may help to reduce your risk of developing diabetes.
- Helping keep your heart healthy by reducing cholesterol levels.
- Reducing constipation and bloating.
- Reducing the risk of hemorrhoids (piles) by making stools softer and bulkier so they are easier to pass

- Helping to build the cells that line the gut with “friendly bacteria” which keep it healthy.
- Reducing the risk of bowel cancer.

Can I eat more fibre?

There are some easy ways that you can add extra fibre into your normal diet. Here are some ideas:

Breakfast:

- Have high fibre breakfast cereals e.g. Shredded wheat, Weetabix, Bran flakes, All Bran or porridge
- Swap white toast for wholemeal toast
- Add dried fruit or a small handful of nuts to your breakfast cereal
- Have a fruit smoothie instead of fruit juice

Main meals:

- Include a portion of high fibre starchy carbohydrate at each meal e.g. jacket potato, wholemeal bread, brown rice, noodles or pasta at each meal
- Try adding peas, beans and lentils to stews, soups, casserole and salads
- Eat a jacket potato with the skin on, instead of just the inside flesh
- Instead of cheese on white toast, have baked beans on wholemeal toast
- Make your sandwiches with wholemeal bread or pitta and salad
- Include a portion of vegetables or salad with each meal e.g. 2 tablespoons peas or sweetcorn or a cereal bowl of salad

Snacks:

- Try to eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables per day daily. These can be frozen, fresh or dried

- Instead of fruit-flavoured yoghurt, have a fruit salad with yoghurt on top
- Try a muesli bar instead of a milk chocolate bar
- Eat a box of raisins, two slices of malt loaf, a wholemeal scone or a small handful of plain popcorn
- When buying biscuits or crackers, choose wholemeal versions e.g. digestives, Ryvita or oatcakes

Fibre tips

- If you need to increase your fibre intake, it is important to do so gradually.

A sudden increase may cause ‘wind’ or bloating. Try including a new fibre food in your diet each week or every few days.

You could build up to including a high fibre food at each meal or snack.

- With a high fibre diet it is important to drink enough fluid (8-10 glasses each day). Too much fibre without enough fluid can cause constipation.

Finding Fibre

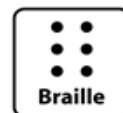
- Many packaged foods carry nutrition labels that show you how much fibre the food contains. **You should aim for around 18g of fibre per day.**
- Look out for foods that have at least 3g of fibre per 100g.
- High fibre foods contain more than 6g of fibre per 100g.

Extra Information

You can find more information on dietary fibre on the following websites:

- British Dietetic Association- www.bda.uk.com/
- NHS Choices- www.nhs.uk/
- Food Standards Agency- www.food.gov.uk/

If you need any further information or help with your diet, please ask your GP or Consultant to consider a referral to a dietitian.



If you require a special edition of this leaflet

This leaflet is available in large print, Braille, on audio tape or disk and in other languages on request. Please contact:

Tel No: 0151 529 2906

Email: interpretationandtranslation@liverpoolft.nhs.uk