

Patient information

Fibre How to Eat More

Dietetics - Therapies

What is fibre?

- Fibre comes from plant foods such as fruit, vegetables, pulses and cereals. It provides bulk in the diet, which helps keep the bowels healthy.
- Lack of fibre in the diet is linked to conditions such as constipation, haemorrhoids (piles) and diverticular disease.

Other suggestions for increasing fibre

- If you bake, use half wholemeal, half white flour in recipes, a little more fluid may be required.
- For dishes needing breadcrumbs use wholemeal bread.
- Add shredded or grated raw vegetables – such as cabbage or carrot to salads.
- Add fresh fruit to yoghurts, milk puddings.
- Add dried or fresh fruit to breakfast cereals.
- Add baked beans, kidney beans or lentils to stew, soup and mince dishes.

Increasing your fibre intake

If your diet is currently low in fibre, you should increase your intake gradually. The dietitian can advise on this.

Aim to have:

- A bowl of high fibre cereal once a day
- Wholemeal bread for toast, sandwiches etc.
- Five portions of fruit and vegetables daily.
- At least eight to ten cups of fluid throughout the day – water, tea, coffee, fruit juices, squashes or fizzy drinks.

Types of fibre

There are two types of fibre found in foods.

- **Soluble fibre** - mainly found in fruit, vegetables, pulses and oats.
- **Insoluble fibre**- mainly found in cereals e.g. wholemeal flour and bread, brown rice and wholemeal pasta.

Although each type of fibre has different effects on the bowel, both types of fibre absorb water to form a soft, bulky stool.

A healthy diet will include both types of fibre.

Foods containing fibre

- **Breakfast cereals**

Wholegrain varieties e.g, Porridge.

A high fibre cereal should contain at least five grams total fibre per portion.

- **Bread**

Wholemeal, granary, Hi Bran, high fibre white bread.

High fibre bread should contain two to three grams of fibre per large slice.

- **Biscuits**

Wholemeal crackers.

Digestives.

Oatcakes.

Cereal bars.

- **Rice and pasta**

Brown rice, wholemeal pasta.

- **Beans and pulses**

Tinned, fresh or frozen peas, baked beans, kidney beans, chick peas, lentils, butter beans.

- **Nuts and dried fruit - All types**

- **Fruit and vegetables**

All types: Fresh, frozen, or tinned, cooked or raw.

Eat the skins where possible e.g. whole apple, jacket potato.

Aim for five portions of fruit and vegetables each day, ideally three fruit and two vegetable portions.

One portion is:

- One bowl of salad.
- Two tablespoons of cooked vegetable.
- One apple.
- One pear.
- One orange.
- One banana.
- Two plums/ satsumas.
- One large slice melon/pineapple.
- One cupful grapes, strawberries, raspberries.

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Further information

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