

Fiber Foods

Brown Health Services Patient Education Series

Why is fiber important?

Fiber, the indigestible part of plant food, helps maintain our bowel movements, avoiding constipation, decreasing incidence of hemorrhoids and diverticular issues, and overall helping our bowel health. There are two types of fiber, soluble and insoluble:

- Soluble fiber (for example, found in apples, oats, peas, beans, barley, most citrus fruits, carrots, and psyllium) forms a gelatinous like substance when mixed with water. Soluble fiber helps lower our risk of coronary artery disease and stroke by 40 - 50% and reduces the risk of developing type 2 diabetes mellitus.
- Insoluble fiber promotes the movement of material through our digestive tract. Examples of insoluble fiber are wheat, bran, nuts, and most veggies.

The Daily Reference Value recommended is 25-35 grams of fiber per day. It is so easy to get fiber in our diet! How about trying apples and oatmeal for breakfast? Wheat toast with grapefruit? Baked beans and grilled veggies with lunch? Or, how about a side salad with fresh raw spinach, red onion, strawberries, and a little olive oil and vinegar?

Fiber obtained through one's diet is preferable because it usually comes along with vitamins and minerals that are obtained in naturally occurring fiber foods. People tolerate increases in fiber variably. At first, adding fiber to the diet can sometimes cause abdominal gas; starting slowly often helps with small increases until stools are soft formed and regular.

Be sure to drink water and unsweetened beverages throughout the day. Fluids help to soften stools and make them easier to pass.

Fiber content of common American foods:

Cereals

Fiber One (½ c.) 14.0g
All Bran (½ c.) 10.0g
Cracklin Oat Bran (¾ c.) 7.0g
Grape Nuts (½ c .) 7.0g
Raisin Bran, avg (1 c.) 6.0g
Frosted Mini-Wheats (1 c.) 6.0g
Raisin Nut Bran (1 c.) 6.0g
Quaker Multigrain oatmeal (1 c cooked) 5.0g
Oat Bran, hot (1 cup cooked) 5 .0g
Oatmeal, steel cut, cooked (2/3rd cup) 5.0 g
All Bran Wheat Flakes (¾ c .) 5.0g
Complete Bran Flakes (1c.) 5.0g
Mueslix (1 c.) 5.0g
Common Sense Oat Bran (¾ c.) 4.0g
Oatmeal, cooked (1 cup) 4.0 g
Wheaties (1 c.) 4.0g
Whole Grain Total (¾ c.) 3.0g
Wheat Chex (2/3 c.) 2.0g
Granola, avg (1/3 c.) 2.0g
Cheerios (1.25 c.) 2.0g
Total (1 c.) 2.0g
Cream of Wheat (1 cup cooked) 1.0g
Corn Flakes (1 c.) 1.0g
Frosted Flakes (1 cup .) 1.0g
Special K (1.25 c.) 1.0g

Other Common Breakfast Foods

Wheat toaster waffles (2) 3.0 g
Pancakes, whole wheat (4") 1.0 g
French Toast (1 slice) 1.0g

Nuts & Seeds

Almonds, dry roasted (1/4 c.) 4.0 g
Pistachio, (1/4 c.) 3.5g
Peanuts, dry roasted (1/4) c.) 2.5g
Sunflower Seeds (1/4 c.) 2.4g
Walnuts (1/4 c.) 1.4g

Fruits

Pears with skin (1 large) 5.2g
Cantaloupe (1 c.) 5 g
Apple with skin, large (1) 5.0 g
Avocado (1 c.) 5.0 g
Blackberries (1/2 c.) 4.0g
Strawberries (1 c.) 3.5g
Dates (5) 3.3g
Raspberries (1/2 c.) 3.0g
Banana (1) 3.0 g
Peach with skin (1) 3.0g
Prunes (3) 2.8g
Grapefruit (1) 2.8g
Orange (1) 2.8g
Cherries (1 c.) 2.6g
Pineapple (1 c.) 2.3 g
Watermelon (1 slice) 2.0g
Applesauce (1/2 c.) 2.0g
Blueberries (1/2 c.) 1.6g
Fig, dried (1) 1.6g
Raisins (1/4 c.) 1.6 g
Grapes (1 c.) 1.0g
Apricot, dried (¼ c) 2.0 g
Plums (1 small) 0.5g

Legumes

Baked Bean, canned (1/2 c.) 9.0g
Kidney Beans, cooked (1/2 c.) 8.2g
Soybeans (1/2 c.) 8.0g
Pinto Beans, cooked (1/2 c.) 7.8g
Navy Beans, cooked (1/2 c.) 7.4g
Lima Beans, cooked (1/2 c.) 6.0g
Chickpeas/garbanzo beans (1/2 c.) 6.0g
Black-eyed Peas, cooked (1/2 c.) 5.3g
Lentils, cooked (1/2 c.) 4.5g
Chili (1 c.) 4.5g
Green Peas, cooked (1/2 c.) 4.3g

Dried Peas (1/2 c.) 4.0g

Grains

Amaranth (½ c. cooked) 7.0 g
Farro (½ c cooked) 6.0 g
Quinoa (½ c. cooked) 5.0 g
Barley (1/2 c. cooked) 3.0 g
Wheat Flour, whole grain (¼ cup) 4.0g
Rolled Oats (½ c) 4.0g
Corn Meal (1/2 c.) 3.6g
Wheat Germ (¼ c) 3.0g
Barley (½ c. cooked) 3.0 g
All-purpose Flour (1/2 c.) 2.0g
Corn Tortilla Shell (1) 1.5g
Grits (½ c. cooked) 1.0g

Rice

Wild Rice (1/2 c cooked) 3.0g
Long Grain brown (1/2 c cooked) 2.0g
Brown (1/2 c cooked) 2.0g
White (1/2 c cooked) 1.0 g

Vegetables

Sweet Peas (1/2 c.) 4.5g
Corn (1/2 c.) 4.0g
Spinach (1/2 c cooked.) 4.0 g
Cabbage, raw (1 cup) 4.0 g
Sweet Potato, baked (1) 3.9g
Potato, baked with skin (1) 3.5g
Mixed Vegetables (1/2 c.) 3.0-4.0g
Okra (1/2 c.) 3.4g
Broccoli (1/2 c cooked.) 3.0g
Parsnips (1/2 c.) 2.7g
Corn (1 ear) 2.6g
Carrots (1/2 c.) 2.5g
Brussel Sprouts (1/2 c cooked) 2.4g
Turnip Greens, boiled (1/2 c.) 2.4g
Carrots, raw (1) 2.3g
Squash (1/2 c.) 2.2g
Cauliflower (1c.) 2.1g
Beets (1/2 c.) 2.0g
Eggplant (1/2 c.) 2.0g
Green Beans, string (1/2 c.) 2.0g
Zucchini (1/2 c.) 2.0g

Potato (1/2 c.) 1.7g
Tomato, raw (1) 1.5g
Lettuce, Iceberg (1 c.) 1.4g
Asparagus (1/2 c.) 1.3g
Mushrooms (1/2 c.) 1.2g
Onions, raw (1/2 c.) 1.2g
Celery, raw (1/2 c.) 1.1g
Cucumbers (1 c.) 2.0 g

Bread, Pasta, Etc.

Whole Wheat Pasta (1 c cooked) 5.0g
Whole wheat flour tortilla, burrito style (1) 5.0 g
Whole wheat bagel (1) 4.0 g
Whole wheat English muffin (1) 4.0 g
Bran Muffin (1) 3.6g
Cheese Pizza (1 slice) 3.0g
English muffin, wheat (1) 3.0g
Whole Wheat Bread (1 slice) 3.0g
MultiGrain Bread (1 slice) 3.0g
Oatmeal Bread (1 slice) 3.0 g
Spaghetti (1 cup cooked) 2.2g
Plain Bagel (1) 2.2 g
Gluten-free Bread (1 slice) 2.0 g
Egg Noodles, cooked (1 cooked) 2.0 g
Cornbread (1 slice) 1.5g
Rye (1 slice) 1.5g
English muffin, plain (1) 1.5g
Pumpnickel (1) slice 1.5g
Hamburger/ Hot Dog Bun (1) 1.3g
White Bread (1 slice) 0.5 g
Wheat Cracker (1) 0.9g
French Bread (1 slice) 0.7g
Pita (1) 0.5g
Italian Bread (1 slice) 0.3g

Fiber Supplements:

There are fiber supplements in pill or powder form that can be added to your diet if needed, always taken with plenty of fluids. Fiber supplements such as Metamucil (psyllium), Citrucel, or other generics, can be taken regularly.

Fiber content of supplements:

Konsyl (1 tsp.) 6.0g
Perdiem Fiber (1 tsp) 4.0g
Konsyl D (1 tsp) 3.4g
Maalox with Fiber (1 tbsp) 3.4g
Mylanta with Fiber (1 tsp) 3.4g
Metamucil (1 tsp) 3.4g
Citrucel (1 tbsp) 2.0g