

HIGH FIBER DIET

Fiber is an important part of our diet and increasing our fiber intake should start as early in life as possible. Fiber helps to regulate the function of our colon and perhaps helps to protect it as we age from diseases such as colon cancer, hemorrhoids, and diverticulosis. Even if you have been diagnosed as already having diverticulosis, hemorrhoids, or other colon abnormality, taking fiber can help protect you from worsening of the condition.

You should take between 25-35 grams of fiber (mixed soluble and insoluble) in your diet daily. Most Americans eat between 5-10 grams of fiber daily. We are not accustomed to the texture of high fiber foods and tend to avoid them, opting instead at our shopping stores for tasty and usually low fiber alternatives. When label ingredients include white flour and processed wheat flour, useful fiber is likely missing from the food product. Salads and many "wheat" breads have very little fiber in them and don't contribute significantly to the daily goal.

When adding fiber to your diet, don't go from 0 to 60 mph in 1 day! For those not accustomed to a high fiber diet, rapidly increasing fiber in your diet will result in bloating, cramping, abdominal pain, and frequent defecation. Work your way to the goal over several weeks. Make sure you drink plenty of water, or you will become more constipated on the new diet. Even when you reach your goal, it will take a few months for your digestive system to become accustomed to the new addition of fiber – don't make a snap judgment and decide to abandon your regimen before giving it several weeks to work.

Although some will find it easy to get 30 g of fiber from their diets, many more don't want to bother changing their diet, shopping differently, and counting grams of fiber. Our busy lifestyles and ease of getting food at restaurants means we don't eat regularly and consistently. Though some may be able to reach their goals with dietary changes only, others will find it easier and more convenient to depend primarily on supplements. Combine and create a mixture of foods and supplements that work for you. If your regimen is too hard to keep up with or doesn't taste good, you will have trouble sticking with it.

Some people say after weeks of using fiber that they don't like it because they are very gaseous or feel bloated. Fibers come in many different forms and types. For example, two of the best known fiber supplements are Metamucil (made of psyllium) and Citrucel (made of methylcellulose). These come as powders, compressed into caplets, and cooked into treats such as cookies and fiber bars. These different choices and preparations come in many forms and could be compared to cars in a car lot: some people like Fords, some like Chevrolet, and for others a Honda works best. If you try psyllium for several weeks and you are having side effects such as bloating or gas issues, try the methylcellulose form – you might like it better than what you tried initially. If the powder form doesn't work, try the caplets. Keep trying alternatives until you find the fiber type and combination that works best for you.

Recently several companies have started making granola bars supplemented with fiber, providing 10g of fiber per bar at around 120 calories per bar. Consider trying these – they are tasty and a shortcut to achieving your daily fiber quota.

Sample Regimen To Provide 30g of Fiber per day:

Scoop of fiber or 2 fiber caplets in the morning
Granola bar as a morning snack
Vegetable at lunch
Granola bar as an afternoon snack
Vegetable at dinner



Product	Amount	Fiber Grams per Serving	Calories Per Serving
Fiber Supplement (powder)	1 Tbsp	3 g	3
Fiber Supplement (capsule)	2 capsules	5 g	3
Fiber One Cereal	½ cup	14 g	110
Fiber One Granola Bar	1 bar	10 g	120
Whole Wheat Bread	1 slice	2.1 g	70-120
White Bread	1 slice	.5 g	70-110
Rice, Brown	½ cup	5.3 g	110
Rice, White	½ cup	1.4 g	133
Pasta (spaghetti)	2 oz.	2.6 g	220
Broccoli	½ cup	2.6 g	22
Corn	½ cup	3 g	89
Green Peas	½ cup	3.4 g	67
Lettuce	1 cup	0.5 g	5
Potato (baked with skin)	½ cup	3 g	57
Spinach	½ cup	2 g	21
Squash	½ cup	2.9 g	57
Tomato	½ cup	1.1 g	19
Green Beans	½ cup	1.9 g	20
Kidney Beans	½ cup	5.5 g	100
Pinto Beans	½ cup	6 g	101
Apple (with peel)	1	2.8 g	81
Apricots	1 cup	3.1 g	74
Banana	1	2.2 g	105
Blackberries	1 cup	7.2 g	74
Grapefruit	1	3.6 g	92
Grapes	1 cup	1.1 g	114
Orange	1	3.1 g	65
Pear	1	4.3 g	98
Prunes	1 cup	13.8 g	246
Strawberries	1 cup	3.9 g	46
Watermelon	1 slice	1.9 g	152