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Get Rich ... in Fiber

What Is Fiber?

Dietary fiber is a complex carbohydrate and is the part of the plant material that cannot be digested and absorbed in the bloodstream.

Soluble fiber may help with weight loss as it makes you feel full longer, and research has shown it also may help lower blood cholesterol. Good sources of soluble fiber include oatmeal, oat bran, barley, dried beans and legumes, and citrus fruits.

Insoluble fiber tends to speed up the passage of material through the digestive tract and reduce the risk of colon cancer and diverticular disease. Good sources of insoluble fiber include wheat bran, whole grain cereals, and fruit and vegetable skins.

What Are the Health Benefits of Fiber?

The health benefits of fiber are well documented in reducing the risk of certain diseases. Fiber is linked to reduced risk of cancer, especially colon and breast cancer, and fiber may help lower LDL cholesterol (bad cholesterol) and total cholesterol levels, which have an impact on the risk reduction of heart disease. Fiber also can help in the management of diabetes by reducing blood sugar.

How Much Is Enough?

Experts recommend healthy adults eat 20 to 35 grams of dietary fiber per day. You can meet this goal by eating a well-balanced diet containing a variety of foods, such as two servings of fruits, three servings of vegetables, and three or more servings of whole grain bread, cereal, pasta or crackers.

Source: John Hopkins Bayview Medical Center (www.jhbmc.jhu.edu)

Top 10 Ways to Add Fiber to Your Diet

1. Start the day off with a bowl of your favorite, delicious high-fiber cereal, such as frosted shredded wheat or whole grain raisin bran.
2. Put fruits, such as berries, raisins, or bananas, on your cereal to increase your fiber intake by about 1 to 2 grams.
3. Combine the great taste of both whole grain and enriched grain breads in your family's diet. For example, introduce whole grain taste to the family by using one slice of white bread and one slice of 100% whole wheat bread when making sandwiches.
4. Next time you are making any type of pasta, instead of using traditional pasta, choose whole wheat pasta. Even macaroni and cheese lovers can use whole wheat macaroni.
5. Substitute wheat bran for one-third of the all-purpose flour when making pancakes, waffles, muffins, or any other flour-based food.



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- 6.** When you feel the urge to start snacking, reach for a delicious muffin, pretzels, or baked pita chips instead of a candy bar.
- 7.** If rice is what you crave, then steer toward brown rice, which offers increased amounts of dietary fiber, iron, and many B vitamins. Plus, it tastes exquisite.
- 8.** Believe it or not, popcorn can be a healthy snack for you and your children. Just don't use too much butter or salt on this whole-grain treat.
- 9.** A great substitute for desserts is a bowl of fruit (especially raspberries, strawberries, and blueberries). Try whole wheat bread pudding with fruit, or perhaps a treat as tasty as a whole grain muffin strikes your fancy.
- 10.** Leave the skins on fruits and vegetables such as pears, apples, peaches, and even potatoes, as opposed to peeling them off. Most of the fiber is in the skin, which will help the digestive tract and may prevent colon cancer.

Sources: www.mypyramid.gov; www.the-weightloss-guide.com; Sue Gilbert, MS