



Fiber

What is it?

Fiber is the nondigestible part of plant foods, such as fruits, vegetables and grains. Soluble fiber forms a gel when mixed with liquid, it aids in bulking and moving food through the gut. Soluble fiber has been proven to reduce blood cholesterol levels, thereby reducing risk of heart disease, especially in combination with a diet low in saturated fat. Insoluble fiber does not mix with liquids and passes through the GI tract mostly intact. Both are key in a healthy diet and in maintaining regularity of the digestive system.

How much do I need?

American Dietetic Association (ADA) recommends 25-30grams per day for adults. It is important to increase the fiber in your diet gradually and drink plenty of fluids.

Dietary fiber sources

Choose more whole grains, high fiber cereals, dried beans and legumes. Eating fresh fruits and vegetables will add fiber to your diet. For example ½ cup of legumes has 8 grams of fiber. That is ¼ of your daily need.

How do I choose a fiber supplement?

Type of Fiber:

The most common type of fiber supplement is psyllium, a soluble plant fiber found in Metamucil® and Konsyl®. Other brands, such as Citrucel, use the plant fiber methylcellulose, the plant fiber wheat dextrin as in Benefiber®, or a synthetic fiber called calcium polycarbophil which is found in Fibercon. There is no specific way to know which fiber will work for you, recommendations from your healthcare team as well as trial and error is best.

Flavorings and Mixing:

Many of the powdered brands have added orange flavoring and are to be mixed with just water, while other varieties are “clear” and can be added to numerous beverages and food items. If you have irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), avoid sugar-free fiber supplements if they contain the sweetener sorbitol, aspartame, and sucralose some of which may exacerbate IBS symptoms.

Powder or Tablet:

It’s really a matter of lifestyle and preference...Powder generally is sold in a tub and should be mixed with water or soft food. Fiber is also available in tablet and wafer form if you need a more portable source. Tablets may be beneficial if you would like to also supplement calcium, most brands offer chewables plus approximately 300mg of calcium per tablet. Metamucil® produces a fiber wafer in various flavors.

How does fiber interact with my prescription medications?

A fiber supplement can interfere with the absorption of some medications. As with most supplements, talk to your healthcare providers before starting a fiber supplement.

30 gram High Fiber Diet (fiber in grams)

Breakfast

¾ cup Raisin bran (6) and milk
Banana (2) and slice of whole wheat toast (2) and jam

Snack

½ cup trail mix (4)

Lunch

2 corn tortillas (3) topped with ¼ cup refried beans (3), lettuce, cheese and salsa
¾ cup brown rice (3) and fresh peach (2)

Snack

Granola bar (2-3)

Dinner

Chicken with ¾ cup quinoa (2) and ½ cup Broccoli (2)