

Focus on Fiber

Patient Name: _____

Health Care Professional: _____

Date: _____

A diet high in fiber may help:

- Maintain healthy blood glucose levels for people with diabetes;
- Lower blood cholesterol; reduce the risk of colon cancer;
- Prevent diverticulitis and constipation; and
- Aid in weight loss by adding bulk to the diet from low-calorie foods, like fruits and vegetables.

Fiber is the part of plant foods that cannot be digested. The major types of fiber are insoluble and soluble. Both are important for good health. Insoluble fiber, what your grandmother called roughage, helps with regularity and is found in wheat bran, whole grains and vegetables. Soluble fiber forms a thick gel when mixed with water. Oatmeal, barley and beans are good sources of soluble fiber. Due to its soluble fiber content, daily consumption of a good-sized bowl of oatmeal has been proven to help lower cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart disease. Experts recommend getting 20 to 30 grams of total fiber each day for good health. For cholesterol reduction, at least half of that should come from soluble fiber.

Fiber Tips

You can raise your fiber intake just by making a few small changes.

- Start the day with a cereal that's a good source of fiber, like oatmeal.
- Top it off with fresh or dried fruit and nuts.
- Add oat bran or wheat bran to pancakes, waffles and muffins.
- Use oatmeal in meat loaf and meatballs.
- Add sliced or shredded vegetables to spaghetti sauce and sandwich spreads.
- Use oat flour as thickening agents in sauces.
- Buy pre-cut vegetables to use for snacks.
- Add raisins and other dried fruit or bran to low-fat yogurt.
- Use whole-grain breads instead of white breads.
- When baking, substitute oatmeal (whirled in a blender to make oat flour) for up to one-third of the flour in a recipe.

High-Fiber Substitutions

Instead of:

White bread
Cream of wheat
White rice
Saltines
Instant mashed potatoes
Apple juice
Regular spaghetti
Corn flakes
Pretzels

Eat:

Whole-grain bread
Oatmeal
Brown rice
Rye crisp
Baked potato
Apple
Whole-wheat spaghetti
Bran flakes
Popcorn

For high-fiber, include in your diet:

- Whole-grain cereals (like oatmeal), breads and pasta—at least 3 servings each day
- Fresh, canned or dried fruits—4 to 5 servings each day
- Fresh, frozen or canned vegetables—4 to 5 servings each day
- Dried bean and peas—3 to 4 servings each week

Fiber in Foods

Cereals and Grains	Serving Size	Total Fiber (grams)
Oat bran, uncooked	1/2 cup	6.0
Oatmeal, uncooked (old-fashioned or quick cook)	1/2 cup	4.0
Pumpnickel bread	1 slice	2.7
Wheat bran	1/4 cup	6.1
Fruits		
Mango, flesh only	1/2 small	2.9
Dried figs	1 1/2	2.3
Pear, fresh, with skin	1 small	2.9
Plum, red	2 med	2.4
Apple, raw, with skin	1 small	2.8
Apricots, fresh	1 small	2.8
Vegetables		
Brussels sprouts, cooked	1/2 cup	3.8
Asparagus, cooked	1/2 cup	2.8
Turnip, cooked	1/2 cup	4.8
Carrots, sliced, cooked	1/2 cup	2.0
Green beans, cooked	1/2 cup	2.8
Beans		
Kidney beans, cooked	1/2 cup	6.9
Black beans, cooked	1/2 cup	6.1
Navy beans, cooked	1/2 cup	6.5
Pinto beans, cooked	1/2 cup	5.9

Sources: <http://hcf-nutrition.org> and The Quaker Oats Company.