

Fibre & Health

What is fibre?

Fibre is the part of plant foods that cannot be digested. Eating adequate amount of fibre in our diet helps to keep our bowels regular as well as helping us to reduce the risks of some health conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, colon cancer, and diverticular disease.



What are the different types of fibre?

The two major types of dietary fibre are soluble fibre and insoluble fibre:

Soluble Fibre

This type of fibre dissolves in water. Consuming soluble fibre helps to control our blood sugar levels and lower our blood cholesterol. Foods rich in soluble fibre include oat bran, oatmeal, psyllium, barley, legumes, pectin-rich fruits (e.g. apples, citrus fruits, bananas, strawberries), and some vegetables such as broccoli, carrots and green peas.



Insoluble Fibre

Insoluble fibre helps to keep our bowels regular by promoting the passage of foods through the digestive system and by adding bulk to the stool. It may help to protect us against colon cancer and rectal cancer. Insoluble fibre is found in wheat bran, whole grain foods such as whole wheat bread and brown rice, legumes, nuts, fruits and vegetables (especially the skin and seeds).



How do we increase our fibre intake?

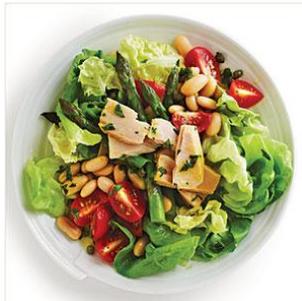
It is important to increase the amount of fibre in our diet SLOWLY to avoid gas, bloating and diarrhea.

Also, remember to drink enough fluids (~6-8 cups each day) to help the fibre work.



Here are some tips:

- ✓ Choose whole wheat or multi-grain breads and buns when buying bread.
- ✓ Try mixing brown rice into white rice.
- ✓ Eat oatmeal or high-fibre cereals at breakfast.
- ✓ Try whole wheat pasta or buckwheat noodles instead of refined pasta/noodles.
- ✓ Enjoy lots of vegetables and fruits each day.
- ✓ Eat the skin of vegetables and fruits whenever possible.
- ✓ Add cut-up fruits and berries to low-fat yogurt.
- ✓ Eat fresh fruits instead of drinking juice.
- ✓ Add beans, nuts, sunflower seeds or pumpkin seeds to salads.
- ✓ Add beans and lentils to soups and different entrees.
For example, add kidney beans to vegetable soup or pasta sauces.



To discuss your questions & concerns with a dietitian, please contact the dietitian's office at Canossa Hospital at 25222181.

Reference:

Practice-Based Evidence in Nutrition "Increasing Your Fibre Intake"; Dietitians of Canada; 2008