

Fibre and your health

What is fibre?

Fibre, also called dietary fibre, is the part of plant foods that the body cannot digest. Fibre is found in vegetables and fruit, whole grain foods, nuts and seeds, and dried beans, peas and lentils. Fibre can be either insoluble or soluble. Most foods have a combination of both.

Canada's food guide recommends eating whole grain foods like oats, quinoa and brown rice. Whole grains include all parts of the grain and have more fibre than refined grains. They also have more vitamins and minerals.

Why is fibre important?

Eating high-fibre foods can lower your risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and colon cancer.

Insoluble fibre can help keep your gut healthy and prevent constipation.

Soluble fibre can help:

- Lower your blood cholesterol level
- Control your blood sugar levels
- Keep you feeling full longer

How much fibre do I need?

Depending on your age and sex, aim for the following amount of fibre each day:

Age (years)	Male	Female
1 to 3	19 g	19 g
4 to 8	25 g	25 g
9 to 13	31 g	26 g
14 to 18	38 g	26 g
19 to 50	38 g	25 g
51 to 70+	30 g	21 g
Pregnancy (any age)	/	28 g
Breastfeeding (any age)	/	29 g

g = gram

People with intestinal diseases may not be able to eat large amounts of fibre, or may need to limit certain food sources of fibre. Speak with your health care provider or registered dietitian to find out how much fibre is right for you.

How can I increase the amount of fibre I eat?

Add fibre to your diet slowly to limit gas, cramping and discomfort. As you increase the amount of fibre in your diet, drink more fluids such as water to help keep your bowel movements soft. Here are some tips to eat more high fibre foods every day:

- Include a vegetable or fruit at every meal and snack.
- Start the day with a whole grain breakfast cereal such as oatmeal or whole grain bread
- Add cooked brown or wild rice, quinoa, pot barley or bulgur to your soup, salad or stir fry
- Add cooked lentils or beans to your soup, casserole, pasta sauce or salad
- Add dried fruits, nuts or seeds to yogurt, muffins, or salads, or eat them on their own

If you find it hard to eat enough fibre from food, talk to your health care provider or registered dietitian about a fibre supplement.

Tips for reading food labels

Check the nutrition facts table on packaged foods for the amount of fibre in a serving. Look for labels that say "high" or "very high" source of fibre, which means the food has at least 4 to 6 grams of fibre per serving.

To identify whole grain foods, check the ingredient list for the words "whole grain" followed by the name of the grain as one of the first ingredients. For example, look for a whole grain flour as a first ingredient in bread. Whole wheat foods, such as 100% whole wheat bread, may not be whole grain but they are still a good source of fibre.

For more nutrition information, call **8-1-1** to speak with a registered dietitian.

Food sources of fibre

Food	Serving Size	Total Fibre (grams)
Vegetables and fruit		
Apple, with skin	1 medium	3.5
Avocado	½ fruit	6.7
Banana or kiwi	1 medium	2.1
Blackberries or raspberries	125 mL or ½ cup	4.1
Brussels sprouts	4 sprouts	3.1
Corn, carrot or broccoli, cooked	125 mL or ½ cup	2.2
Green peas, frozen, cooked	125 mL or ½ cup	3.7
Mango	1 fruit	3.3
Mixed vegetables or yam, cooked	125 mL or ½ cup	2.8
Pear, canned halves	125 mL or ½ cup	2.1
Pear, with skin	1 medium	5.3
Potato, with skin	1 medium	4.0
Yellow beans, cooked	125 mL or ½ cup	9.7
Grains		
All bran cereals (any kind)	30 g	10.0*
Bran flakes	30 g	4.6*
Bran, 100% natural wheat bran	30 mL or 2 Tbsp	3.1
Bread, sprouted grain	35 g or 1 slice	3.3 to 5.0*
Oat Bran, prepared	175 mL or ¾ cup	3.7*
Oatmeal, large oats, prepared	175 mL or ¾ cup	3.2*
Popcorn, air-popped	500 mL or 2 cups	2.5
Quinoa, amaranth or bulgur, cooked	125 mL or ½ cup	2.7
Shredded Wheat	30 g	3.9*
Whole wheat spaghetti, cooked	125 mL or ½ cup	2.4*
Whole wheat bread, commercial	35 g or 1 slice	2.1*
Beans, peas, lentils, nuts, seeds		
Adzuki beans, cooked	175 mL or ¾ cup	12.4
Almonds, dry roasted	60 mL or ¼ cup	3.8
Black beans, cooked or canned	175 mL or ¾ cup	10.6
Chia seeds	15 mL or 1 Tbsp	3.7
Edamame (green soy beans), cooked	175 mL or ¾ cup	6.0
Flax seeds, whole	15 mL or 1 Tbsp	2.9
Hummus	175 mL or ¾ cup	7 to 11
Kidney beans, dark red, cooked	175 mL or ¾ cup	8.6
Lentils or garbanzo beans (chickpeas), cooked	175 mL or ¾ cup	5.5
Peanut butter, natural	30 mL or 2 Tbsp	2.5
Peanuts, dry roasted	60 mL or ¼ cup	3.1
Soy nuts, roasted	175 mL or ¾ cup	6.8
Split peas, cooked	175 mL or ¾ cup	4.2
Sunflower seed kernels, dry roasted	60 mL or ¼ cup	3.6

g = gram, mL = millilitre, Tbsp = tablespoon *Check the nutrition facts table to confirm the amount

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