

Fiber, Fiber, Fiber: Why More Matters

Spring 2018 Nutrition Newsletter

Bethesda Medical Associates

Fiber is an integral part of a healthy diet. Not only does fiber help regulate digestion and reduce the risk of heart disease, but it also helps you feel full after meals which assists with regulating caloric intake. It is important to prioritize fiber in the diet but ensure you are getting it from whole food sources, like the ones listed on the back of this sheet, versus processed products since they tend to come with added sugars and salt. Spring is a great time to focus on fiber and prioritize getting all of the fresh produce that farmers markets have to offer. Read on below to learn more about how fiber assists us with maintaining health and promoting a healthful dietary intake.



Fiber & Digestion: One of the biggest benefits of fiber is how it can assist with promoting normal bowel movements. The different types of fiber (soluble and insoluble) bulk the stool along with softening it which can help prevent constipation and hemorrhoids. High fiber diets also help reduce the risk of more severe diseases like colon cancer and diverticulosis since it helps waste move through the colon on a daily basis. Different types of fiber are also food sources for the bacteria in the colon which helps keep the gut biome in balance.



Fiber & Heart Health: Soluble fiber, the type found in beans, apples, carrots, oats and lentils, has also been shown to help reduce cholesterol levels in the body. Cholesterol is made from bile and soluble fiber binds bile in the small intestine causing it to be excreted versus reabsorbed. The more bile that is excreted, the more needs to be created and the body uses our cholesterol to make that bile. This cycle helps reduce LDL cholesterol which makes foods with soluble fiber a great addition to a heart healthy diet.



Fiber & Satiety: Both types of fiber slow down the transit of food from the stomach into the intestines. That delay in transit helps your body send the “I am full” signals for longer periods of time. Combining protein with fiber (like adding shrimp or chicken to a salad) will increase the effect and help you stay full even longer. Spring is the perfect time to enjoy fresh salads. Salads can be a combination of two or more vegetables so think simple. From mixed greens tossed with olive oil and vinegar to cooled lentils combined with leftover cherry tomatoes and cucumbers, you will never go wrong with adding a simple salad to your day.

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Enjoy These High Fiber Foods this Spring

It is recommended women aim for at least 25g of fiber per day and men aim for at least 38g per day. Use the chart below to start prioritizing consuming the natural foods high in fiber.

HIGH FIBER FOODS	SERVING SIZE	FIBER (Grams)
Legumes		
Navy beans, cooked from dried	1 cup	19.1
Split peas, cooked from dried	1 cup	16.3
Lentils, cooked from dried	1 cup	15.6
Kidney beans, canned	1 cup	13.6
Cereals & Grains		
100% (wheat) Bran Cereal	1/2 cup	12.5
Bulgur, cooked	1 cup	8.2
Pearled barley, cooked	1 cup	6
Oat bran, cooked	1 cup	5.7
Quinoa, cooked	1 cup	5.2
Instant oatmeal, cooked	1 cup	4
Rice, long-grained brown, cooked	1 cup	3.5
Vegetables		
Artichoke Hearts, cooked	1 cup	14.4
Spinach, frozen, cooked	1 cup	7
Brussel sprouts, cooked	1 cup	6.4
Winter squash, cooked	1 cup	5.7
Mushrooms, cooked from fresh	1 cup	3.4
Fruits		
Prunes (pitted) Fresh	1 cup	12.4
Asian pear	1 pear	9.9
Guava, fresh	1 cup	8.9
Raspberries, fresh	1 cup	8
Blackberries, fresh	1 cup	7.6
Nuts and Seeds		
Chia seeds	1 ounce	9.8
Flax seeds	1 ounce	7.7
Pumpkin seeds	1 ounce	5.2
Almonds	1 ounce	3.5
Pistachio nuts	1 ounce	2.9