



Eat More Dietary Fiber

CHALLENGE
Eat 25 to 38
grams of dietary
fiber daily.



Requirements to Complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Keep a written record of the fiber in your diet, using the fiber log on page 3.
2. On your monthly Health Challenge Calendar, record the amount of fiber you eat each day.
3. Read "The value of dietary fiber."
4. To complete the Challenge, eat 25 grams (females) or 38 grams (males) of dietary fiber at least 22 days this month.
5. Keep records of your completed Challenge in case your organization requires documentation.

What is fiber?

Fiber is the part of carbohydrates that cannot be digested. It is found only in plant foods – whole grains, legumes (e.g., lentils and beans), nuts, fruits, and vegetables. There are different types of fiber. Soluble fiber partially dissolves in water, and resembles jelly. Insoluble fiber is another kind of fiber that passes through your digestive system basically unchanged. Different kinds of fiber protect against different kinds of diseases.

The average American consumes 15 grams of fiber daily. That is far below the National Institute of Medicine recommendation:

- ✓ Women should aim for 25 grams of dietary fiber daily
- ✓ Men should aim for 38 grams of dietary fiber daily

The current recommendation is that fiber needs to come from food, not supplements. Many foods have no fiber, but provide a variety of vitamins, minerals, and nutrients. Meat, fowl, fish, and dairy products do not contain fiber. This includes milk, cheese, yogurt, and ice cream. Juices contain little fiber, and there is no fiber in soft drinks, eggs, sugar, and fats. The best fiber sources are whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, legumes, and nuts.

GRAINS

Barley, pearled, cooked	½ cup	3.0 grams
Bread, whole-wheat	1 slice	1.7 grams
Bread, white	1 slice	0.6 gram
Bulgur wheat, cooked	½ cup	4.1 grams
Cereal, bran flakes	¾ cup	5.3 grams
Corn grits, yellow	½ cup	0.5 grams
Flour, whole wheat	½ cup	7.3 grams
Oatmeal, plain, cooked	¾ cup	2.8 grams
Rice, brown, cooked	1 cup	3.5 grams
Rice, white, cooked	1 cup	0.7 gram

BEANS

Baked beans, canned	½ cup	7.0 grams
Black beans, cooked	½ cup	7.0 grams
Great northern beans, cooked	½ cup	6.2 grams
Kidney beans, cooked	½ cup	5.7 grams
Pinto beans, cooked	½ cup	7.4 grams
Soybeans, cooked	½ cup	6.0 grams

FRUITS

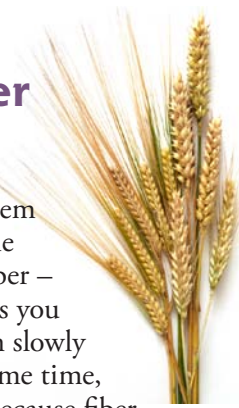
Apple	1 medium	3.3 grams
Apricot	3 medium	2.1 gram
Banana	1 medium	3.1 grams
Blackberries, fresh	1 cup	7.6 grams
Blueberries, fresh	1 cup	3.5 grams
Dates	½ cup	7.1 grams
Orange	1 medium	3.1 grams
Peach	1 medium	1.5 grams
Pear	1 medium	4.4 grams
Prunes, dried and stewed	½ cup	3.8 grams
Raisins	½ cup	2.7 grams
Red raspberries, fresh	1 cup	8.0 grams

VEGETABLES

Acorn squash, fresh, baked	½ cup	4.5 grams
Artichoke hearts, cooked	½ cup	4.5 grams
Asparagus, cooked	½ cup	1.8 grams
Broccoli, chopped, cooked	½ cup	2.6 grams
Brussels sprouts, cooked	½ cup	2.0 grams
Cabbage, cooked	½ cup	1.4 grams
Carrot, cooked	½ cup	2.3 grams
Green beans, cooked	½ cup	2.0 grams
Lettuce, romaine	1 cup	1.2 gram
Potato, with skin, baked	1 medium	3.8 grams

The value of dietary fiber

Dietary fiber is an essential part of a healthy diet. It helps prevent constipation and diverticulosis (a common bowel problem linked to low-fiber diets), and enhances the overall function of the bowel. Insoluble fiber – especially wheat bran and oat bran – keeps you “regular.” Increase your fiber consumption slowly to give your body time to adapt. At the same time, increase the amount of water you drink, because fiber absorbs water.



High-fiber diets also decrease your risk of type 2 diabetes. Eat lots of unrefined foods – especially whole grains. These are high in dietary fiber and help lower blood sugar (glucose) levels.

A high-fiber diet tends to be lower in calories, helping fill you up before you get too many calories thus helping prevent excess weight gain.

In the EPIC study, there was a 40% lower incidence of colorectal cancer in those who had an average intake of 35 grams of dietary fiber daily. Another study, called the Polyp Prevention Trail, found that those eating beans regularly had the lowest rate of advanced polyp recurrence compared to those eating the fewest beans. Another recent study found that eating a lot of fruits, berries, pure fruit juice, and green leafy vegetables was protective against polyps.

Fiber helps remove cholesterol from your digestive system. In fact, this is essentially the only way the body has of getting rid of cholesterol from the body. For every 5-10 grams of soluble fiber eaten, LDL cholesterol (the “bad” cholesterol) levels drop by 5%. The risk of death from heart disease drops 2-3% for every 1% drop in LDL cholesterol levels. An analysis of 10 studies from the United States and Europe shows that fiber from whole grains and fruit is especially protective against heart disease.

MyPyramid Food Guide

GRAINS

Eat 6 oz or 6 servings every day

- Eat at least 3 oz (3 servings) of whole-grain cereals, breads, crackers, rice, or pasta daily
- 1 oz is about 1 slice of bread, 1 cup of breakfast cereal, or ½ cup of cooked brown rice, whole grain cereal, or pasta

VEGETABLES

Eat 2½ cups or 5 servings every day

- Eat more dark leafy greens like broccoli and spinach
- Eat more orange vegetables like carrots and sweet potatoes
- Eat more dry beans (peas, pinto beans, kidney beans, and lentils)
- A serving is: ½ cup cooked, 1 cup salad or raw veggies

FRUITS

Eat 2 cups or 4 servings every day

- Eat a variety of fruit
- Choose fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruit
- Get most of your fruit from whole fruits, not juices
- A serving is: 6 oz fruit juice, 1 medium fruit, ½ cup cooked



FATS, SUGARS & SALT (SODIUM)

- Get most of your fat sources from vegetable oils, nuts, avocados, and fish.
- Limit solid fats like butter, stick margarine, shortening, and lard, as well as foods that contain these.
- Choose food and beverages low in added sugars. Added sugars contribute calories with few, if any nutrients.
- Eat plenty of dietary fiber: 25 g/day for women, and 38 g/day for men.
- Limit sodium to less than 2,400 mg/day – 1,500 mg/day if your blood pressure is high.
- Check nutrition labels to keep sodium, saturated fats, and trans fats low.

MILK & DAIRY

Drink/eat 2–3 servings every day

- Choose low-fat or fat-free milk, yogurt, cheese and other milk products
- If you don't or can't consume milk, choose lactose-free products or other calcium sources such as soymilk and other foods and beverages fortified with calcium and vitamin B-12
- A serving is: 1 cup milk, yogurt, fortified soymilk, or low-fat cheese; ½ cup low-fat cottage cheese

MEAT & BEANS (PROTEINS)

Eat 5½ ounces or 3–5 servings every day

- Emphasize plant proteins—choose beans (pinto beans, kidney beans, lentils, soy, split peas, hummus, etc.) tofu, vegetable protein, peas, nuts, and seeds
- Choose fish and low-fat or lean meats and poultry
- Bake or broil instead of frying meat
- A serving is: 1 oz nuts or seeds; ½ cup beans, peas, lentils; 1–2 oz lean meats; 1 egg

If you are very active, choose the larger serving recommendations.

Recommendations from USDA MyPyramid (MyPyramid.gov) and NIH DASH diet

Nutrition tips

- **Avoid alcohol.** If you do drink, limit yourself to no more than 1 or 2 drinks in 1 day. One drink is defined as 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1½ ounces of distilled liquor.

You shouldn't drink at all if you are:

- Taking medications
- Pregnant or planning to conceive
- Planning to drive or participate in activities requiring clear judgment
- Unable to keep drinking within moderate limits

Multiple vitamins

Most persons may benefit from a daily supplement. Calcium may also be helpful for non-dairy users.

Water

Drink plenty of water, at least 5 to 8 glasses daily.

Ways to increase fiber in your diet

- Choose an orange or grapefruit instead of juice for breakfast.
- Use fresh or dried fruits for desserts or snacks.
- Add cooked beans and peas to soups, stews, casseroles, and salads.
- Choose whole-grain breads and cereals instead of white bread and white rolls.
- Choose high-fiber grains, such as buckwheat, brown rice, and bulgur, in place of white rice or white flour products in side dishes, soups, and stews.
- Leave the skin on potatoes, fruits, and vegetables. This outer layer is high in fiber.
- Try bran cereal, oats, or soy-based cereal as an added ingredient to recipes.
- Add raw bean sprouts to your sandwiches.
- Snack on a handful of nuts or a few raw vegetables instead of cookies or chips.
- Use your daily fiber log. It will remind you to eat fiber-rich foods.
- Eat 2-3 cups of vegetables each day.
- Eat 2 or more cups of fruit each day.
- Eat at least 3 servings of whole-grain cereals, breaks, crackers, rice, or pasta daily.
- Emphasize plant proteins – beans, lentils, peas, nuts, and seeds – in place of meats.

Daily Total Fiber Log Photocopy and use these daily fiber logs to help you count your fiber grams (gm).

Food Group/ Serving Size	Fiber gm/ Serving	X	# of Servings Eaten	=	Food Group Totals
Legumes ½ cup beans, peas, lentils	7	X		=	
Fruits 1 medium fruit, ½ cup cooked	3.5	X		=	
Whole Grains 1 slice whole- grain bread, 1 cup breakfast cereal, ½ cup cooked brown rice, whole- grain cereal, or pasta	3	X		=	
Vegetables ½ cup cooked, 1 cup salad	2.5	X		=	
Nuts & Seeds 1 ounce	2.3	X		=	
Daily Total Fiber					

Food Group/ Serving Size	Fiber gm/ Serving	X	# of Servings Eaten	=	Food Group Totals
Legumes ½ cup beans, peas, lentils	7	X		=	
Fruits 1 medium fruit, ½ cup cooked	3.5	X		=	
Whole Grains 1 slice whole- grain bread, 1 cup breakfast cereal, ½ cup cooked brown rice, whole- grain cereal, or pasta	3	X		=	
Vegetables ½ cup cooked, 1 cup salad	2.5	X		=	
Nuts & Seeds 1 ounce	2.3	X		=	
Daily Total Fiber					

Write the Daily Total Fiber on your Health Challenge Calendar.

Sources:

U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2010.

Harvard School of Public Health. 2010.

Nutrition, Metabolism, and Cardiovascular Disease.

The Lancet. 2003;361(9368):1496-1501.

Journal of Nutrition. 2006;136(7):1896-1903.

Journal of Nutrition. 2009;139(2):340-344.



Eat More Dietary Fiber

CHALLENGE
Eat 25 to 38
grams of
dietary fiber
daily.

Instructions

1. Post the Health Challenge Calendar and daily fiber log where you will see them daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Use the daily fiber log to help you determine how many grams of fiber you eat each day. Record the amount of fiber in grams you eat each day on the Health Challenge Calendar. Use this calendar to also record your exercise program (min/day), weekly weight, and any other items you may want to track.
3. At the end of the month, total the number of days you ate at least 25 grams (women) or 38 grams (men) of dietary fiber. You must meet this goal at least 22 days out of the month to complete the Challenge. Then keep up this health practice for a lifetime of best health!
4. Keep this record for evidence of completion.

MONTH: _____							HC = Health Challenge™ ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary
HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	
Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	
HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	
Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	
HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	
Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	
HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	
Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	
HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	HC <input type="checkbox"/>	
Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	Fiber gm _____ ex. min. _____	

_____ Number of days this month I ate 25 to 38 grams of dietary fiber

_____ Number of days this month I got 30+ minutes of physical activity such as brisk walking



Other wellness projects completed this month:

Signature _____ Date _____

