

# 7069 - F I B E R



## What is fiber?

Dietary fiber is from all the parts of plant food that our body can't digest.

**Insoluble fiber:** This type of fiber promotes the movement of material through your digestive system and increases stool bulk, so it can be of benefit to those who struggle with constipation or irregular stools. Whole-wheat flour, wheat bran, nuts and many vegetables are good sources of insoluble fibre.

**Soluble fiber:** This type of fiber dissolves in water to form a gel-like material. It can help lower blood cholesterol and glucose levels. You can find generous quantities of soluble fiber in oats, peas, beans, apples, citrus fruits, carrots, barley and psyllium.

## What fiber can do for your body!

There are many benefits to a fiber-rich diet.

- **Prevents constipation:** Fiber adds weight and bulk to your stool which helps with passing through your body.
- **Lowers risk of digestive conditions:** A high fiber diet may help reduce the risks of hemorrhoids, irritable bowel syndrome and diverticular disease (small pouches in your colon).
- **Lowers blood cholesterol levels:** Soluble fiber can help lower cholesterol by decreasing the levels of low-density lipoprotein or "bad" cholesterol levels.
- **Controls blood sugar levels:** In particular, soluble fiber can slow the absorption of sugar into the bloodstream – this is important for those with diabetes.
- **Aids in weight loss:** Firstly, high fiber foods take more effort to chew which gives your body time to register when you are getting full. Secondly, a high fiber meal tends to make you feel full for longer. Thirdly, high fiber diets tend to be less "energy dense", meaning that there tends to be fewer calories for the same volume of food.
- **Heart Disease:** Fiber has been linked to reducing the buildup of plaque in the arterial walls in the heart. Reducing this plaque reduces the risk of a heart attack.

## Tips for adding fiber into your diet:

Generally we need 25-35 g of fibre each day. Do you get enough?

- Replace white rice, bread, and pasta with brown rice and whole grain products.
- Choose whole grain cereals for breakfast.
- Eat whole fruits instead of drinking fruit juices.
- Snack on raw vegetables instead of chips, crackers, or chocolate bars.
- Substitute legumes for meat two to three times per week in chili and soups.
- Experiment with international dishes (such as Indian or Middle Eastern) that use whole grains and legumes as part of the main meal (as in Indian dahls) or in salads (for example, tabbouleh).

## Important Tips:

- **Increase slowly** – Find out how much fiber you are currently eating then slowly increase to the recommended amount. Increasing too quickly can lead to diarrhea, gas and bloating.
- **Add fluids** – Make sure to keep your fluids up! Increasing fiber increases the amount of water absorbed from your foods.
- **Don't go overboard** – Remember everything in balance. Pay attention to how your bowels are reacting to the fiber increase.
- **Little here little there** – You don't need to get all your daily fiber in one meal – add fiber to your diet in bits. Tip: add ground flaxseed to anything you eat.

