Q. Why is eating fiber good for you?

A. *Eat more fiber.* You've probably heard the advice before. But why eat more fiber? Fiber is good for your health for a variety of different reasons. And most adults don't eat enough of it.

- **Women** should eat 25 grams of fiber per day.[1]
- **Men** should eat 38 grams of fiber per day.

In fact, most adults only eat about 15 grams of fiber per day. And that's a problem. If you don't eat enough fiber, it can have a negative impact on your heart health, digestion, blood sugar levels, weight and longevity. Here are just a few reasons to eat more fiber:

1. Support heart health

Eating foods high in fiber can help improve cholesterol, lower blood pressure, and aid in weight management. These are important factors that help prevent heart disease, the leading cause of death in the United States. Research shows following a high-fiber diet may cut your risk for heart disease by 40 percent.[2]

2. Improve digestion

A diet rich in fiber improves bowel health. Fiber helps prevent constipation. If you're constipated, it's often caused by not eating enough fiber, not drinking enough water, and lack of exercise.

Eat Fiber-Rich Foods

3. Prevent or control diabetes

About 34 million people in the United States have type 2 diabetes. Another 88 million people have pre-diabetes. It's largely preventable with diet, exercise, and healthy lifestyle habits. This includes eating foods high in fiber.

Research shows eating a fiber-rich diet can help control blood sugar levels, and prevent diabetes.[3] Even if you already have diabetes, fiber helps slow digestion and regulate blood sugar levels. Sugary snacks, drinks, processed foods, and even too much red meat can raise your risk for diabetes.

4. Help you live longer

Want to live longer and be healthier? Eat more fiber-rich foods. Aiming for a high-fiber diet could lower your risk for early death from heart disease and other chronic conditions, according to the American Heart Association. One study found that eating fiber cut the risk of diabetes by 20 percent. It's one of the leading causes of death in the United States.[4]

ASK THE DOCTOR — Wellness

Eat more fiber-rich foods

Now you know a little more about the health benefits of eating more fiber. Aim for 25 to 38 grams of fiber per day. Foods high in fiber include:

- Fruits (raspberries, apples, bananas, oranges, strawberries)
- Vegetables (carrots, beets, broccoli, cauliflower)
- Whole grains (cereal, bread, oats, whole grain pasta)
- Legumes. They're highest in fiber of all foods (beans, lentils, peas)
- Nuts and seeds (flax meal, sunflower seeds, squash/pumpkin seeds, almonds, peanuts, etc.)

Want to feel better, be healthier and live longer? Eat more fiber.

References

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