



Eat Fiber-Rich Foods

CHALLENGE

Feast on fiber to improve your health

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read “Eat Fiber-Rich Foods.”
2. Create a plan to eat more fiber-rich foods daily.
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



When Michigan resident Bree Maloney went to work at a desk job, she usually packed a lunch or went out to eat.¹

And even though her choices were relatively healthy, her stomach didn't seem to agree. She felt bloated. She was tired most of the time. And she was gaining weight.

Bree wasn't always chowing down on fast food, soft drinks, and sugary snacks like the typical American office worker. But there was one specific nutrient she was missing: Fiber.

“I decided to ditch the processed junk,” says Bree. “I started incorporating more soups, beans, roasted veggies, fruits, and salads into my workplace diet. And I noticed an enormous difference. I had more energy, slept better, felt lighter, and more importantly, I did not have as much belly bloat.”

How much fiber do you eat in a day? If you don't know, you're not alone. But if your diet looks anything like typical fast-food fare, you're probably not getting enough.

Fortunately, a few changes to your diet can fix that. Take the month-long health challenge and Eat Fiber-Rich Foods to improve your health.

Fiber: Feast or Famine?

How much do you know about fiber? Take the quiz to find out.



T F

1. The average adult in the U.S. only eats 20 to 30 grams of fiber per day.²
2. For best health, women should eat 25 grams of fiber per day. Men should get 38 grams of fiber per day.
3. Fiber is only found in plant-based foods.
4. Eating a lot of fiber may help reduce the risk for stroke, high cholesterol, heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and certain types of cancer.³
5. One cup of split peas has four times as much fiber (16 grams) as one cup of oatmeal.

How did you do? Most only eat 10 to 15 grams of fiber per day. If you don't know how much fiber you eat in a day, read food labels, and keep track. Then make fiber-rich foods part of your daily diet to improve your health and prevent disease.

Answers: 1.False, 2.True, 3.True, 4.True, 5.True.

How Much Fiber Do You Need?

Fiber is only found in plant-based foods like fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, and legumes. And it's likely you need to eat more of it.

The American Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recommends:⁴

- **Women:** 25 grams of fiber per day
- **Men:** 38 grams of fiber per day

How to get more fiber in your diet
<https://tinyurl.com/52xwyzc8>

15 Easy Ways to Eat More Fiber



It's easy to say you're going to eat more fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, and legumes. But if you're not eating enough fiber right now, what can you do to change your eating habits?

Here are 15 easy ways to eat more fiber:

1. **Choose whole-grain breads and cereals** instead of white bread and sugary cereals.
2. **Leave the skin on potatoes, apples, and carrots.**
The outer layer is highest in fiber.
3. **Go nuts.** Snack on a handful of nuts, seeds, or raw vegetables instead of cookies or chips.
4. **Add cooked beans and peas** to pasta, soups, stews, casseroles, and salads.
5. **Choose an orange or grapefruit** instead of juice for breakfast. (Juice doesn't have a lot of fiber.)
6. **Eat fresh or dried fruit** for desserts or snacks.
7. **Make a smoothie with fresh fruit** and toss in high-fiber foods like flaxseed, avocado, and leafy greens.
8. **Choose high-fiber grains** like brown rice, bulgur, quinoa, and couscous instead of white rice and white flour.
9. **Puree vegetables** and add to sauces and stews.
10. **Replace white rice** with chopped cauliflower (cooked).
11. **Make pancakes with high-fiber flour** instead of white flour or a packaged mix.
12. **Add raw sprouts** to sandwiches and salads.
13. **Sprinkle flaxseed** in oats, smoothies, yogurt, and baked goods.
14. **Drink plenty of water.** The more fiber you eat, the more water your digestive system needs to break down food. If you don't, you could end up with constipation.

Take the Dietary Fiber Quiz
<https://tinypurl.com/ys26a3ka>

9 Healthy Reasons to Feast on Fiber

If you think the classic childhood lecture, "Eat your fruits and vegetables," was just a ploy to get you to follow the rules, think again.



Foods high in fiber are good for your health in many ways and help prevent disease. (It's OK. Call your mom, and tell her she was right.)

Research shows that eating a fiber-rich diet may help:⁵

1. Reduce the risk for heart disease
2. Prevent stroke Lower blood pressure
3. Improve absorption of nutrients from food
4. Control or prevent diabetes
5. Support weight loss and weight management
6. Improve digestion
7. Control cholesterol levels
8. Strengthen the immune system
9. Prevent certain types of cancer

15. **Keep a food log and read food labels** to track how much fiber you're eating per day. Aim to eat 25 to 30 grams of fiber. Keeping track will remind you to choose food high in fiber.

Add More Fiber to Your Diet Gradually

If you're not getting enough fiber in your diet now, start by eating a little more fiber than you did yesterday. Then gradually eat a little more each day, like these fiber-rich foods:

- Split peas
- Lentils
- Black beans
- Lima beans
- Peas
- Oats
- Bran flakes
- Raspberries
- Blackberries
- Avocados
- Broccoli

When Bree Maloney started eating 25 to 30 grams of fiber a day, she felt a lot better, less tired, and less bloated. Like Bree says, "Get out there and get your diet and your mind focused on fiber, fiber, fiber."

Can oatmeal reverse heart disease?
<https://tinypurl.com/33y3c2vz>

References

1. Maloney, B. (2017). How fiber changed my life. LinkedIn Pulse. From: <https://tinypurl.com/y7fgbqcv>
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3. Greger, M. (2017). Fiber. NutritionFacts.org. From: <https://nutritionfacts.org/topics/fiber>
4. Ellis, E. (2020). Fiber. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. From: <https://tinypurl.com/5ascwz49>
5. Timm, M., et al. (2023). Beyond dietary fiber: Bioactive compounds in plant foods. *Nutrients*, 15(19): 4138. From: <https://tinypurl.com/4byp3env>



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Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, or add to your digital calendar).
2. Create a plan to eat more fiber-rich foods daily.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions and choices to eat more fiber-rich foods.
4. Review your progress at the end of each day, each week, and at the end of the month. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

MONTH:							HC = Health Challenge™ ex. min. = exercise minutes
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary
HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	HC [] ex. min. _____	
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_____ Number of days this month I ate high-fiber foods
 _____ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:

 Name _____ Date _____