



HERE FOR YOU

Should I be eating more fiber?





# What is Fiber?



- Comes from plant forms in food that the body cannot digest.
- Unlike other food components like protein and fat, which is absorbed into the body, fiber remains intact.
- There are 2 types of fiber: soluble and insoluble
  - Both types are good for us and we should enjoy a variety of high fiber foods.

## 2 Types of Fiber: Soluble

- Dissolves in water and makes a “gel-like” consistency. Helps to lower “bad” cholesterol, reduce heart disease and stabilize blood sugar levels.
  - Examples: black beans, avocado, Brussel sprouts, sweet potatoes, broccoli, pears, apples and oatmeal.

## 2 Types of Fiber: Insoluble

- Improves the movement of materials through the digestive system and adds stool bulk (helpful for those who experience constipation or irregular stools).
  - Examples: whole wheat flour, wheat bran, cauliflower, green beans and potatoes.

# What Does Fiber Do?

- Reduce constipation
- Normalize bowel movements
- Helps lower the “bad” cholesterol
- Reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, colon cancer, and heart disease
- Can assist in weight management as fiber can help you to feel “fuller” or more satiated for longer

# Current Recommendations

- Currently, Americans are consuming about 10-15g of fiber each day...
- USDA recommends that for people under 50 years of age:
  - Women 25g
  - Men 38g

# Fiber on Nutrition Fact Labels

- Choose foods that contain more fiber
- Look for labels that say “whole grain”
  - Multi-grain or 12-grain likely means the grain is refined and the “whole” grain has been removed (the part we need!).
- Per serving aim to choose
  - Cereals with >6g of fiber
  - Pasta with >4g of fiber
  - Breads and crackers >3g of fiber



# How do I increase my fiber intake?

- If you are looking to reap the rewards of having regular, comfortable bowel movements, and increase your overall health, here are some ways that you can easily incorporate fiber into your diet.

# Breakfast

- Choose a high fiber cereal (look for 10g or less of sugar too!) Examples:
  - Plain Shredded wheat (or try half frosted, half plain)
  - Fiber One (tends to be safe, just watch the sugar content)
- Plain oats and add:
  - Berries, bananas or other fruits
  - Nuts and/or seeds
  - The options are endless!
- Incorporate nuts, chia seed or ground flax seed, fruit or oats to plain or Greek style yogurt or smoothies!



# Lunch and Dinner

- Add vegetables, beans and/or peas into soups, chilis, stews, omelettes, and pasta dishes
- Add berries, nuts and/or seeds to a fresh salad with an oil-based dressing

# Snacks

- Air popped popcorn
  - Keep the butter and salt to a minimum
  - Try a “no salt added” spice blend!
- Make veggies your “go-to” snack:
  - Carrots, sugar snap peas, broccoli, cauliflower, and/or green beans
  - Use a healthy dip such as hummus, salsa or homemade guacamole



# Trainer Tips

- Keep the skin/peels on produce such as potatoes, apples and cucumbers as half of the fiber is found within the skin.
- Products that claim *added fiber* usually contain “inulin” or “chicory root” – many people complain of gassiness and bloating after eating foods with *added fiber*.
- Drink lots of water! Fiber works best when it absorbs into water, making your stool softer and easier to pass.
- Add fiber into your diet slowly to allow your gastrointestinal tract time to adapt.
- Consider some of these options if you are looking to increase your overall health, improve bowel movements and/or work towards weight management.
- If you experience any digestive distress, such as constipation, or are planning to dramatically change your diet, seek out your physician’s advice first.