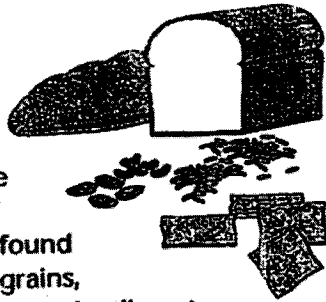


Nutrition Matters

FACTS ON DIETARY FIBRE

WHAT IS DIETARY FIBRE?

Dietary fibre is the part of plants we cannot digest. It plays an important role in the prevention and treatment of some diseases. Fibre can be found only in foods of plant origin: grains, cereals, vegetables, fruit, legumes, lentils, nuts and seeds. Meat, fish and milk products do not contain dietary fibre.



IS ALL FIBRE THE SAME?

No. There are different types of fibre, each with different health benefits. There are two main types of fibre: **soluble** and **insoluble**. All plants contain both soluble and insoluble fibres in varying amounts. To get a good combination of the different types of fibre, eat a variety of fibre-rich foods.

WHAT IS INSOLUBLE FIBRE?

- This kind of fibre is best known for keeping bowels regular.
- It may also help prevent some colon and rectal cancers.
- It is mostly found in wheat bran, wheat bran products, whole grain products and some vegetables (e.g., carrots, broccoli, peas and the skins of fruits).

WHAT IS SOLUBLE FIBRE?

This fibre seems to help reduce blood cholesterol and slow down the rate that glucose (sugar) enters the blood.

It is mostly found in dried peas, beans, lentils, oat bran, barley, and some vegetables and fruit.

HOW MUCH FIBRE SHOULD YOU EAT?

Canadians eat an average of 15 grams of dietary fibre daily. Experts recommend that we increase the amount we eat to between 25 to 30 grams of dietary fibre per day.

HOW CAN YOU BOOST YOUR FIBRE INTAKE?

Fibre-rich foods are not only good for you, but they taste good too. Enjoy a variety of fibre-rich foods. Here are some suggestions:

- Gradually increase the amount of fibre-rich foods you eat to give your body a chance to get used to it. Too much too soon can cause bloating, gas and feelings of discomfort.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Choose whole grain breads and cereals.
- Enjoy a variety of vegetables and fruit with the skins whenever possible.
- Include dried peas, beans and lentils in your meals.
- Snack on fibre-rich foods such as carrots, apples, bran muffins, nuts and seeds.
- Eat a variety of foods. This ensures that you will eat a variety of fibres as well as a variety of nutrients.



WHEN GROCERY SHOPPING

Fill your basket with fresh vegetables and fruit in season. Canned and frozen vegetables and fruit contain most of the fibre goodness of the fresh product. These can be used when the fresh produce is less available or more costly.

Choose baked goods that include fibre-rich whole

wheat flour, wheat bran, oat bran, oatmeal, raisins and poppy and sesame seeds.

New fibre products are constantly being developed to meet consumer demand. Look for the fibre content on packages of foods. When fibre content is highlighted on a package label, it must meet certain government standards.

Choose foods from the following table to help boost your daily fibre intake:

FIBRE SOURCES

More than 6 grams fibre – a very high source

175 mL (¾ cup)	high fibre bran cereal
125 mL (½ cup)	cooked legume (dried peas, beans and lentils)
125 mL (½ cup)	dried fruit
125 mL (½ cup)	sesame, sunflower seeds
125 mL (½ cup)	nuts
250 mL (1 cup)	berries

4-6 grams fibre – a high source

1 medium	baked potato with skin
1 medium	apple, pear
250 mL (1 cup)	brown rice, barley
1	bran muffin
125 mL (½ cup)	green peas, snow peas, lima beans
125 mL (½ cup)	sweet potato

2-4 grams fibre – a source

125 mL (½ cup)	most vegetables
1 medium	citrus fruit
1 slice	whole wheat, rye bread
250 mL (1 cup)	melon

A product may be described as a:

- **"Source of"** dietary fibre if it contains at least 2 g of dietary fibre per serving.
- **"High source"** of dietary fibre if it contains at least 4 g of dietary fibre per serving.
- **"Very high source"** of dietary fibre if it contains at least 6 g of dietary fibre per serving.

FIBRE FALLACIES

Crispness is not an indicator of the fibre levels in foods. Salad vegetables, although crisp, are not necessarily high in fibre. The "crunch" comes from the amount of water, not fibre.

Cooking does not break down fibre. Peeling removes some fibre as it removes the skin.

SUPPLEMENTS

Fibre is a group of very different substances. No one knows the best combinations. If you eat a wide variety of foods, you are likely to get all types of fibre. In addition, you receive all the nutrients, and flavour of the foods themselves.

Enjoy fibre from foods - it is much more pleasurable.

For more information on fibre and delicious fibre-rich recipes look in:

The Total Fibre Book by Margaret Fraser and Helen Bishop MacDonald, 1987.

Full of Beans by Violet Currie and Kay Spicer, 1993.

Smart Cooking: Quick and Easy Recipes for Healthy Living by Anne Lindsay, 1996.

Great Food Fast (Dietitians of Canada) by Bev Callaghan and Lynn Roblin, 2000.

Lean Bean Cuisine by J. Solomon, 1994.

More HeartSmart Cooking by Bonnie Stern, 1997.

New Light Cooking by Anne Lindsay, 1998.

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