



Craig Hospital

Redefining Possible for People with Spinal Cord and Brain Injuries

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Fiber in your Diet

A diet high in fiber is essential for a successful bowel program. Fiber helps the body's digestive system work well and keeps food moving through the digestive tract.

Benefits of Fiber

Because of the way fiber works in your body, it can help prevent and/or treat:

- Constipation – When bowel movements are difficult and irregular because the stool has become really hard and compact due to not enough fiber and or water.
- Diverticulosis – When abnormal sacs bulge from the lining of the colon.
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome – A condition affecting the muscles lining the intestines causing periods of constipation and diarrhea.
- Hemorrhoids – Swollen veins of the rectum.

Fiber absorbs water and expands like a sponge. Fiber makes stool softer and larger which causes the stool to pass through your system more quickly and with less strain.

Fiber also lowers the risk of diabetes and heart disease and aids in weight loss and blood sugar control.

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Types of Fiber

Insoluble Fiber:

- Found in: wheat bran, vegetables, whole grains
- Speeds up digestion (helps with constipation)

Soluble Fiber:

- Found in: oats, barley, lentils, fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts, seeds, psyllium
- Slows digestion (helps with diarrhea)
- Lowers LDL and total cholesterol

How much should I eat?

25-35 grams of fiber per day is recommended but no more than 35 grams per day.

Increase fiber gradually over several months to prevent digestive discomfort and intestinal gas.

Fiber supplements such as Benefiber, Metamucil or Fibercon can be used if you're unable to get fiber by diet.

When you increase the fiber in your diet, you must also increase your fluid intake. Fiber pulls fluids from your body and if fluid is not replaced, it could lead to constipation.

Sample label for Macaroni & Cheese

Eat 20-25 grams of Dietary Fiber everyday!

1 **Start Here** →

2 **Check Calories**

3 **Limit these Nutrients**

4 **Get Enough of these Nutrients**

5 **Footnote**

6 **Quick Guide to % DV**

- 5% or less is Low
- 20% or more is High

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 3g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A	4%
Vitamin C	2%
Calcium	20%
Iron	4%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	Calories: 2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g	375g
Dietary Fiber	25g	30g

FDA (2009). *How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Facts Label*. Downloaded January 19, 2011 from <http://www.fda.gov/food/labelingnutrition/consumerinformation/ucm078889.htm>

Fiber in Your Diet

The following is a list of foods you will find useful to increase the fiber in your diet:

	Serving	Calories	Dietary Fiber (in Grams)
Breads and Cereals			
Bran flakes	¾ cup	95	4.0
Raisin bran	¾ cup	115	4.0
Whole-wheat spaghetti	1 cup	155	3.9
Wheat germ, plain	¼ cup	110	3.4
Bran muffin	1 muffin	104	2.5
Oatmeal, cooked	¾ cup	110	1.6
Whole-wheat bread	1 slice	60	1.4
Spaghetti, regular	1 cup	155	1.1
Popcorn, air-popped	1 cup	25	1.0
Rice, brown	½ cup	95	1.0
White bread	1 slice	80	0.4
Rice, white	½ cup	80	0.2

	Serving	Calories	Dietary Fiber (in Grams)
Fruits			
Apple	1 medium	80	3.5
Pear	½ large	60	3.1
Strawberries	1 cup	45	3.0
Prunes, dried	3 prunes	60	3.0
Orange	1 medium	60	2.6
Banana	1 medium	105	2.4
Blueberries	½ cup	40	2.0
Grapefruit	½	40	1.6
Orange juice	½ cup	55	0.5
Apple juice	½ cup	55	0.4

	Serving	Calories	Dietary Fiber (in Grams)
Vegetables			
Peas, green	½ cup	60	3.6
Corn	½ cup	85	2.9
Potato, with skin	1 medium	106	2.5
Brussels sprouts	½ cup	30	2.3
Carrots	½ cup	25	2.3
Broccoli	½ cup	20	2.2
Sweet potato	½ medium	80	1.7
Green beans	½ cup	15	1.6
Bean sprouts (soy)	½ cup	15	1.5
Tomato	1 medium	20	1.5
Kale	½ cup	20	1.4
Cabbage	½ cup	15	1.4
Summer squash	½ cup	15	1.4
Spinach, raw	1 cup	10	1.2
Celery	½ cup	10	1.1
Lettuce, shredded	1 cup	5	0.9
Onions, sliced	½ cup	35	0.8

	Serving	Calories	Dietary Fiber (in Grams)
Legumes			
Kidney beans	½ cup	110	7.3
Navy beans	½ cup	110	6.0
Lima beans	½ cup	65	4.5
Lentils	½ cup	95	3.7

	Serving	Calories	Dietary Fiber (in Grams)
Nuts			
Peanuts	10 nuts	105	1.4
Almonds	10 nuts	80	1.1

Source: NIH Publication NO. 87-2878, revised May 1987. Fiber values may differ from other sources because of differences in analytic methods.

Fiber in Your Diet