

Dietary Fiber



What is Fiber?

Also known as roughage or bulk, it includes all parts of the plant that our bodies can not digest or absorb. Therefore, it passes relatively intact through the digestive system.

Fiber is classified into two categories: those that don't dissolve in water (insoluble fiber) and those that do dissolve (soluble fiber).

How Much?

- Women under 50 need 25 g per day
- Women over 50 need over 21 g per day
- Men under 50 need 38 g per day
- Men over 50 need 30g per day

Insoluble fiber promotes the movement of material through the digestive system and increases stool bulk, so it can be of benefit to those who have constipation or irregular stools.

Soluble fiber dissolves in water to form a gel-like material. It can help lower blood cholesterol and glucose levels.

Refined or processed foods— such as canned fruits and vegetables, pulp-free juice, white bread, pasta, and non-whole grain cereals— are lower in fiber content. The grain refining process removes the outer coat (bran) of the grain, which lowers the fiber content. Similarly removing the skin from fruits and vegetables decreases the fiber content. Fiber supplements such as Metamucil don't provide the nutrients that high-fiber foods do.

Cholesterol	25mg	8%
Sodium	300mg	13%
Total Carbohydrate	9g	3%
Dietary Fiber	2g	8%
Sugars	3g	
Protein	8g	

Because fiber is indigestible, it can be subtracted from the total carbohydrates when counting carb calories. In this example, there are $9-2=7$ grams of digestible carbohydrates.

Examples: Plant Sources of Fiber

Soluble:

Oats, peas, beans, apples, citrus fruits, carrots, and barley.

Insoluble:

Whole wheat flour, wheat bran, nuts, vegetables.

Benefits of a High Fiber Diet:

- Lowers cholesterol
- Controls blood sugar levels
- Aids in weight loss (makes us feel full)
- Aids in digestion
- Possibly reduces risk of colorectal cancer