

Fit Fibre Into Your Day

It's Easier Than You Think!

What is Fibre?

Fibre (also known as dietary fibre) is found only in plant foods, such as grain products, legumes, vegetables, and fruit. Meat, fish, poultry, eggs, and milk products do not contain fibre.

There are two types of fibre: soluble and insoluble. It is important to have both types in your diet as they help the body in different ways.

Soluble Fibre

Soluble fibre dissolves in water. This type of fibre may help lower blood cholesterol levels when combined with a healthy, lower fat, eating plan. It can also help control blood sugar levels in some people with diabetes.

Good sources of soluble fibre include: dried beans, peas and lentils; some grains, such as oats, barley, and psyllium; and certain vegetables and fruit, including apples, plums, oranges, strawberries, Brussels sprouts, and carrots.

Insoluble Fibre

Insoluble fibre holds water like a sponge. This helps prevent constipation by making stools bulkier, softer, and easier to pass. It also helps prevent bowel problems, such as diverticulosis and hemorrhoids and may lower the risk of certain cancers, such as colon cancer.

Wheat bran, bran cereals, whole grain products, such as 100% whole wheat bread, brown rice, and many vegetables and fruit are good sources of insoluble fibre.

How much fibre should I eat?

The Dietary Reference Intakes outline adequate intakes of fibre for children, adolescents, and adults.

	Age (years)	Amount per day (grams)
Children	1 to 3	19
Children	4 to 8	25
Boys	9 to 13	31
Boys	14 to 18	38
Girls	9 to 18	26
Men	19 to 50	38
Men	51 and above	30
Women	19 to 50	25
Women	51 and above	21

Increase fibre intake gradually to help you avoid problems, such as excess gas, bloating, or diarrhea. Drink plenty of fluids, especially water, as this helps fibre work effectively.

A quick note on children and fibre: Introducing children to higher fibre foods will help them develop good eating habits that they can maintain throughout their lives. However, try not to overdo a good thing. Too much fibre may cause children to feel full quickly, resulting in a decreased intake of other nutritious foods.

Shopping for high fibre foods

Check the ingredient list when buying packaged food products, such as breads, crackers, and cereals. Look for whole grains, such as whole wheat flour listed first on the ingredient list.

Look for the **Nutrition Facts Label**. It provides more detailed nutrition information. You can use this label to compare similar products to determine which choice has the most fibre. A high source of fibre is 4 grams per serving. Here is an example of where to find this information:

How can I get more fibre into my diet?

For starters, begin your day with high fibre foods, such as whole grain breads. Include 5 to 10 servings of vegetables and fruit throughout the day. Eat dried beans, peas, and lentils more often to help boost the fibre in your diet.

Barley and Bean Soup

This soup is quick and easy to prepare. It is loaded with fibre, good taste, and colour galore!

- 1 10 oz/284mL can chicken broth plus 3 cans water
- 1/3 cup pot or pearl barley, rinsed
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 19 oz/540mL can red kidney beans, drained, rinsed
- 1/2 cup frozen green peas
- salt and pepper to taste
- Garnish: 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley or dill

- In medium saucepan, combine chicken broth, 3 cans water, and barley; bring to a boil. Add carrot and bay leaf; cover and simmer 30 minutes or until barley is tender.
- Stir in beans and frozen peas; simmer uncovered 2-4 minutes or until peas are heated through. Garnish with fresh parsley or dill.

Makes about 6 1/2 cups.

Variation: Add diced, cooked chicken.

Storage: Can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 2 to 3 days.



Nutrient Analysis per 1 1/2 cup serving

207	calories
13g	protein
1.5 g	fat
36g	carbohydrate
7g	dietary fibre

Recipe developed and tested by Teresa Makarewicz,
Professional Home Economist.

Tips for Fibre Boosters

Breakfast is a good meal to work in some fibre:

- ✓ Start your morning with a cereal that contains at least 4 grams of fibre per serving. If your favourite cereal is a lower fibre choice, top it with a few spoonfuls of high fibre bran cereal or ground flax seeds.
- ✓ Add about one tablespoon of natural wheat bran when cooking a serving of cream of wheat or oatmeal.

Tips for Grain products:

- ✓ Choose whole grain foods, such as breads, rolls, pita, and tortillas instead of white flour products, which are low in fibre.
- ✓ Try different grains like brown rice, bulgur, cracked wheat, or barley in soups, salads, or side dishes.
- ✓ Include wheat bran or oat bran in breading mixtures, meat loaf or meatballs, chili, and as a topping on casseroles or fruit crisps.
- ✓ Use whole wheat flour and whole grains like oats to make muffins and cookies.
- ✓ Substitute whole wheat flour for about half of the white flour called for in your favourite bread, muffin, and dessert recipes.

Tips for Vegetables and Fruit:

- ✓ Leave the skins on vegetables and fruit whenever possible, for snacks or in cooking. Eating the skin of a baked potato or apple will increase its fibre content by nearly 50%.
- ✓ Choose fresh fruit over fruit juice. The "bulk" of the fibre is in the skin and the pulp.
- ✓ Add dried fruit like raisins, prunes, and chopped apricots, or dates to cereals, salads, casseroles, and baked goods.
- ✓ Snack on a variety of raw vegetables like broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, green and red pepper strips. For even more fibre, serve them with bean dip.
- ✓ Remember that cooked vegetables have fibre too.

Tips for Meat and Alternatives:

- ✓ Replace meat in pasta dishes with kidney beans, romano beans, or lentils.
- ✓ Top a salad with chick peas, green peas, or nuts and seeds.



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For more information please call the Nutrition and Physical Activity Advice Line at 905-546-3630 or visit www.hamilton.ca/phcs

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