

FIBER 101



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- What's the difference between all of the fiber types?
- Which type should you be having and are processed grains still high in fiber?
- Fiber is essential because it promotes gut health and also helps reduce the risk of developing many chronic diseases.
- For instance, fiber prevents constipation, hemorrhoids and diverticulosis.

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- A high-fiber diet is also linked to lower risk of developing some cancers, especially colon and breast cancer.
- In addition, it helps lower LDL cholesterol and total cholesterol. Furthermore, high-fiber foods generally have a lower glycemic index value, an important element in managing Type 2 diabetes.
- **Tip:** Slowly increase fiber into your diet.
- Adding too much fiber too quickly can be linked to constipation.
- It's important to give your digestive system time to get used to the additional roughage.

Soluble Fiber and Insoluble Fiber

- Both soluble and insoluble fiber are undigested.
- They are therefore not absorbed into the bloodstream.
- Fiber content is often listed under “Total Carbohydrates” on a Nutrition Facts label.
- Because it is undigested, it provides 0 calories
- Instead of being used for energy, fiber is excreted from our bodies.
- Soluble fiber forms a gel when mixed with liquid, while insoluble fiber passes through our intestines largely intact.

Insoluble Fiber

Functions of Insoluble Fiber

- Move bulk through the intestines
- Control and balance the pH (acidity) in the intestines

Benefits of Insoluble Fiber

- Promote regular bowel movement and prevent constipation
- Remove toxic waste through colon in less time
- Help prevent colon cancer by keeping an optimal pH in intestines to prevent microbes from producing cancerous substances

Insoluble Fiber

Top Insoluble Fiber Foods

- Wheat bran, 11.3 grams of insoluble fiber per 1/2 cup
- All Bran cereal, 7.2 g per 1/3 cup
- Most beans (1/2 cup)
 - Kidney beans, 5.9 g
 - Pinto beans, 5.7 g
 - Navy beans, 4.3 g
- Lentils, 4.6 g per 1/2 cup



Insoluble Fiber

Top Insoluble Fiber Foods

- Most Whole grains. Bulgur, for instance, contains 4.2 grams of insoluble fiber in 1/2 cup
- Flax seeds, 2.2 g per 1 tbsp
- Chia seeds 4.5g per 1 tbsp
- Vegetables (1/2 cup)
 - Okra, 3.1 g
 - Turnip, 3.1 g
 - Peas, 3 g

Soluble Fiber

Functions of Soluble Fiber

- Binds with fatty acids
- Prolong stomach emptying time so that sugar is released and absorbed more slowly

Benefits of Soluble Fiber

- Lower total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol (the Bad cholesterol) therefore reducing the risk of heart disease
- Regulates blood sugar for people with diabetes

Soluble Fiber



Top Soluble Fiber Foods

- Purple passion fruit, 6.5 g of soluble fiber per 1/2 cup
- Psyllium husk, 3.5 g per 1 Tbsp
- Oat/Oat bran, 2.2 g per 3/4 cup
- Some Beans (1/2 cup)
 - Black beans, 2.4 g
 - Navy beans, 2.2 g
 - Kidney beans, 2 g

Soluble Fiber

Top Soluble Fiber Foods

- Soy
 - Tofu, 2.8 g per 3/4 cup
 - Edamame, 1.5 g per 1/2 cup
- Vegetables (1/2 cup)
 - Avocado, 2.1 g
 - Brussels sprouts, 2 g
 - Sweet potato, 1.8 g
 - Asparagus, 1.7 g
 - Turnip, 1.7 g

Soluble Fiber

Top Soluble Fiber Foods

- Fruit
 - Dried figs, 1.9 g per 1/4 cup
 - Orange, 1.8 g, medium size
 - Fruit with skin, like pear, apricots, and nectarine, ~ 1.2 g
- Flax seed, 1.1 g per 1 tbsp

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The Bottom Line

- An average diet contains 75:25 insoluble fiber: soluble fiber ratio.
- When making a food choice decision, don't worry about choosing a specific type of fiber.
- Many foods such as oat, oat brans, psyllium husk and flax seed are rich in both insoluble and soluble fiber.
- The goal is to get at least 25 – 35 grams of fiber per day through fruits, vegetables, whole grains (gluten free if applicable) and legumes.