Karoo Health
America's Cardiac Solution®

The Importance of Fiber

What is Fiber?

Fiber, also known as roughage or bulk, is a type of carbohydrate that the body can't digest, instead passing through the GI tract mostly intact to provide a variety of health benefits. Children and adults have a recommended intake of **25-35 g** per day for good health. However, the average American only receives about 10-15 grams per day. Good sources of fiber come from whole grains, fruits, vegetables, nuts, and legumes. Some of the benefits of fiber include:

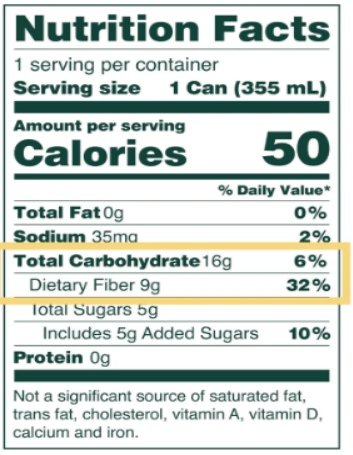
- **Lowering cholesterol and reducing risk of CVD**
- **Lowering blood sugar**
- **Increasing satiety and promoting weight management**
- **Lowering risk of certain types of Cancer (colorectal, breast)**

Types of Fiber (Insoluble vs Soluble)

- **Soluble Fiber**: Dissolves in water to form a thick, gel-like substance that can help lower cholesterol and blood glucose levels, provide a feeling of fullness, and lower the risk of colorectal cancer. Soluble fiber also serves as a source of prebiotics for healthy bacteria to break down and feed on in the gut.
    - **Sources include: peas, oats, beans, apples, blueberries, citrus fruits, carrots, chia seeds, nuts, lentils, barley and psyllium**
- **Insoluble Fiber**: Does not dissolve in water, allowing it to pass through the GI tract relatively intact, adding bulk to your stool and decreasing constipation and irregular stools. This also prevents the risk of developing hemorrhoids, diverticulitis, and colorectal cancer.
    - **Sources include: Whole-wheat flour, wheat bran, nuts, beans and vegetables, such as cauliflower, broccoli, kale, green beans and potatoes, fruits with skin such as pears and apples**

Tips and Tricks to Add More Fiber to Meals

The recommended daily intake for people 2 years and older is 14 grams for every 1000 calories consumed daily. This would be around 28 grams for a standard 2000 calorie diet. When adding fiber to your diet, keep in mind:



- Start slow-Adding too much fiber too quickly can result in excess gas, bloating, cramping, and diarrhea
- Drink fluids-As some fibers work best when they absorb water, being well hydrated can help prevent uncomfortable bowel movements.
- Check the nutrition label for total fiber content when buying packaged foods as amounts can vary from brand to brand

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Tips to Increase Intake Include:

- Eat a minimum of three servings of vegetables and two servings of fruit daily
- Try to make ½ your plate consist of fruits/vegetables at each meal
- Keep raw, cut-up pieces of vegetables and fruit on hand to have as snacks and to throw in stir-fries, pastas, casseroles, etc.
- The more colorful the better for choosing high fiber foods- Choose colorful dark green, orange, and red vegetables, such as broccoli florets, carrots, and red peppers.
- Replace refined grains like white rice, bread, and pasta with higher fiber choices such as brown or wild rice, whole wheat bread, and pastas (made from whole wheat, lentils, chickpeas, black beans)
- Eat a source of legumes (beans, lentils, peas) 3x/week

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List of foods containing fiber:

Vegetables	Serving Size	Dietary Fiber (g)
Asparagus, cooked*	½ cup	2g
Avocado*	½ cup	6g
Baked potato with skin	1 medium	4g
Beets	½ cup	2g
Breadfruit (ulu)	½ cup	3g
Broccoli cooked	½ cup	3g
Brussel sprouts*	½ cup	3g
Cabbage, cooked	½ cup	1g
Carrots, raw	1 medium	2g
Cauliflower, cooked	½ cup	1g
Chinese mustard greens	½ cup	2g
Corn, cooked	½ cup	2g
Eggplant, cooked*	½ cup	2g
Green beans, cooked	½ cup	2g
Kabocha pumpkin*	½ cup	2g
Lettuce, Romaine	2 cups	2g
Onions, chopped	½ cup	1g
Peas, cooked	½ cup	4g
Poi	½ cup	1g
Spinach or luau leaves, cooked	½ cup	3-4g
Sweet potato* or taro (kalo)*, cooked	½ cup	4g
Tomato, raw	1 medium	2g
Turnips, cooked	½ cup	2g

Beans, Nuts, and Seeds	Serving Size	Dietary Fiber (g)
Almonds	¼ cup	4g
Black beans, cooked*	½ cup	8g
Black, kidney, or pinto beans*	½ cup	8g
Chia seeds*	2 tbs	6g
Flaxseed, ground*	2 tbs	4g
Lentils, cooked*	½ cup	8g
Lima beans, cooked*	½ cup	7g
Macadamia nuts	¼ cup	3g
Mungo beans*	¼ cup	8g
Navy beans, cooked*	½ cup	10g
Peanuts	¼ cup	3g
Pecans, chopped	¼ cup	3g
Pistachios	¼ cup	3g
Soybeans (Edamame)*	½ cup	5g

*High in soluble fiber. Source: USDA National Nutrition Database for Standard Reference.

Fruits	Serving Size	Dietary Fiber (g)
Apple, with peel*	1 medium	3g
Apricots*	1 medium	1g
Asian pear*	1 medium	4g
Banana	1 medium	3g
Cantaloupe	½ cup	1g
Cherries	10 medium	1g
Figs, raw	1 medium	1g
Guava	½ cup	4g
Honeydew	½ cup	2g
Mango*	1 medium	4g
Nectarine	1 medium	2g
Orange*	1 medium	3g
Papaya	½ cup	1g
Peach, with skin	1 medium	2g
Pear, with skin*	1 medium	5g
Pineapple	½ cup	1g
Prunes*	½ cup	6g
Raisins	½ cup	3g
Raspberries	½ cup	4g
Strawberries, sliced	½ cup	2g

Cereal	Serving Size	Dietary Fiber (g)
All bran (varies with brand)	½ cup	10-14g
Bran flakes (varies with brand)	1 cup	7g
Bulgar, whole wheat, cooked	1 cup	6.5g
Cheerios	1 cup	4g
Fiber One	½ cup	14g
Oats, old fashioned, cooked*	1 cup	4.5g
Oats, steel cut, cooked*	1 cup	5.5g
Popcorn	3 cups	3g
Raisin bran	1 cup	7g
Shredded wheat	1 cup	6g
Wheat bran	2 tbs	3g
Wheaties	1 cup	3g

Grains	Serving Size	Dietary Fiber (g)
Barley, cooked*	1 cup	6g
Brown rice, cooked	1 cup	4g
Farro, cooked	1 cup	5g
Quinoa, cooked	1 cup	5g
Rice noodles	1 cup	2g
Rye bread	1 slice	2g
Whole wheat bread	1 slice	3g
English muffin, whole grain	½ muffin	3g
Pasta, whole wheat, cooked	1 cup	4g

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