



Fiber Can Be Your Friend

Fiber has a very popular reputation for “Keeping Things Moving,” if you know what I mean. But did you know fiber can also help to keep you moving physically and facilitate weight loss as well. Fiber is a hot topic in the research field due to its recently discovered beneficial effects. Over the last ten years research studies have demonstrated that fiber can help with weight loss, diabetes control, prevention of heart disease, and prevention/treatment of some bowel disorders.

Why is this important to you?

Weight Loss! Fiber is proven to increase satiety (feeling of fullness). Therefore a high fiber diet results in fewer kcal consumed. Fiber also allows you to continue feeling full longer due to its slower transit time in the intestines. The overall benefits of these actions are not just limited to weight reduction but better blood sugar control and increased excretion of food by-products like cholesterol. All of which can result in a healthier you.

How much do you need?

The recommended daily allowance for fiber intake is 30-38 grams per day for men and 21-25 grams per day for women. Men and women over 50 are on the lower end of the recommended intake. May sound simple but if you were to track your fiber intake you might find that your intake is just like the average American intake, 12-15grams/day.

How can you get that much fiber in your diet?

Evaluate your diet.

- Have you heard of the Five-A-Day recommendation? Aim for at least 5 fruits and vegetables everyday and when possible select fresh with the skin on.
- When you're snacking add a fruit or vegetable in place of the higher fat or starchy snacks.
- Place your entrée of meat or tofu on a bed of vegetables instead of white rice.
- Select whole grain products whenever possible. Remember just because it says wheat does not mean its whole grain. Check the label for fiber content. A good amount is 3 grams or more per serving if you are just starting out. For those fiber junkies you know that 5 grams or more really makes it worth it.
- A handful of nuts or seeds, eaten in moderation, are an excellent way to add fiber on the run.
- Load the veggies on your sub, pizza, and yes even your hamburger.
- If you just don't think you can eat that much fiber there are numerous products on the market that are packed with fiber. For example All-Bran Honey-Oat Bars™ (5grams) or Fiber One Chewy Bars™ (9grams)[oats and chocolate are my favorite]. The new products beat the old Metamucil or Citrucel any day. Keep in mind that kcals also accompany those grams of fiber, read the labels and balance your diet.
- If you think you are better suited for a pill or powder form check with your doctor or dietitian before stocking up.

Introduction to Fiber Eating 101

- Gradually Increase Your Intake – remember the old reputation of fiber (Motility), it still applies
- Drink Plenty of Water- this is key because fiber without fluid is just bulk which means it will not move and now you have another problem, constipation.
- Spread your intake out throughout your day and don't try to set a world record for the most fiber consumed in one day, nobody is going to hear about it because you'll be stuck in the bathroom.
- If increased fiber means increased gas and bloating to you check into Beano® to see if it is appropriate for you. Your co-workers and the people at the gym will appreciate it too.

Sources www.eatright.org and www.medicinenet.com

What is fiber?

Dietary Fiber- consists of non-digestible carbohydrates and lignin that are intrinsic and intact in plants, for example the fiber from wheat bran or oat bran.

Functional Fiber – isolated non-digestible carbohydrates that have beneficial physiological effects in humans. Including non-digestible plant, chitin, chitosan, or commercially produced carbohydrates.

Total Fiber – sum of the dietary fiber and functional fiber

*The point → **Total Fiber** is what is important!

You may have also heard of fiber talked about in terms of

Soluble fiber: dissolves in water to become gelled

Example: oats, legumes (beans), apples, bananas, berries, some vegetables, and psyllium

Insoluble fiber: increases the movement through your digestive tract and stool bulk

Examples: whole wheat foods, bran, nuts, seeds, the skin of some fruits and vegetables.

Terminology source Food and Nutrition Board and medicinenet.com

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