

Increasing Your Fibre Intake

Adapted for African and Caribbean Diets

There are two different kinds of fibre found in foods, each with different health benefits. Most foods with fibre contain a mixture of both soluble and insoluble fibre.

- | Soluble fibre is found in vegetables like sweet potato and asparagus, fruit like avocado and oranges, and other foods like flaxseeds, whole grains and legumes (beans, peas and lentils). It can help to lower blood cholesterol and control blood glucose (sugar) levels.
- | Insoluble fibre is found in vegetables and fruit (especially the skin), and in whole grains, wheat bran, legumes (beans, peas and lentils), nuts and seeds. It can help keep your bowels regular to prevent constipation and may protect against colon cancer.

Eat a variety of foods to get enough of both types of fibre. A healthy diet should include 25-38 grams of fibre a day.

Increase the fibre in your diet slowly to avoid gas, bloating and diarrhea. Divide fibre-containing foods evenly throughout the day at both meals and snacks. Aim to drink 2.2 L to 3 L (9 to 12 cups) of fluid each day.



Steps you can take

- | Eat at least seven servings of vegetables and fruit every day. For example, choose kale, swiss chard, collard greens, spinach or cassava leaves.
- | Eat the peels of your vegetables and fruits whenever possible. For example, do not peel cucumbers or potatoes.
- | Eat fresh fruit instead of drinking juice.
- | Try having fruit as a snack or as a dessert.

© 2009 Dietitians of Canada. All rights reserved.
May be reproduced in its entirety provided source is acknowledged.

This information is not meant to replace advice from your medical doctor or individual counseling with a registered dietitian. It is intended for educational and informational purposes only.

- | Eat at least six servings of grain products each day. Aim for at least half of your grain products to be whole grain. Choose whole-grain breads, whole-grain couscous, and brown rice.
- | Use whole grain whole-wheat flour to make roti, bake, puff puff and dumplings. Add some ground flax seed or bran to the dough.
- | Use whole grain flour (maize, finger millet or barley) to make your favourite breakfast cereal or porridge.
- | Add one to two tablespoons of bran, flax seed or a very high-fibre cereal to your favorite cereal or porridge in the morning.
- | Add grated vegetables (for example, grated carrots) to dumpling batter.
- | Use more peas than rice when cooking rice and peas.
- | Add ground flaxseed and fresh fruit to yogurt and eat as a dessert.
- | Add vegetables like green onions, grated carrots, and celery to soups.
- | Add toasted unsalted nuts, sesame seeds, sunflower or pumpkin seeds to salads.
- | Compare food labels to find out which products are highest in fibre. High-fibre foods have more than four grams of fibre per serving.

Distributed by: