



...because health matters!

Nutrition Matters

September 2000

A Publication of the Peterborough County-City Health Unit

Fabulous Fibre!

Canadians eat too little fibre. In fact, most of us need to double our fibre intake.

Fibre is the part of plant foods that we can't digest. It is found in vegetables, fruits, grain products and legumes (peas, beans, lentils). There is no fibre in meat, milk and milk products. And you can't always tell by the crunch if it's high in fibre. For example, iceberg lettuce and celery don't contain a lot of fibre. Cooking a food doesn't change the amount of fibre in a food but if you peel it, it does.

Fibre is not absorbed into the body. As fibre travels through the digestive system it provides many possible health benefits. Since it is not digested, fibre does not provide the body with energy (calories). Therefore, high fibre foods are often filling without being fattening.

Foods contain two kinds of fibre: soluble and insoluble. Each type works differently in your body and has unique health benefits. Therefore, you should enjoy a variety of fibre containing foods every day!

Soluble Fibre

- Helps lower blood cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart disease.
- Helps control blood sugar levels by slowing down the rate which sugar is absorbed into the bloodstream. This may be helpful for people with diabetes.

Soluble fibre is found in oat bran, oatmeal, legumes, barley, some vegetables and fruits such as apples, citrus fruits and strawberries.



Take It Easy

Increase your fibre intake slowly to give your body a chance to get used to it. Too much too soon can cause bloating and gas.

Insoluble Fibre

- Keeps your bowels working normally and helps keep you "regular".
- Softens and increases the bulk of stools for easier passage through the bowel.
- Helps reduce your risk of colon cancer, diverticular disease, hiatus hernia, hemorrhoids and constipation. A low fibre diet is the major cause of constipation.

Insoluble fibre is found in wheat bran, whole grains such as whole wheat and brown rice, seeds, skins of fruits and vegetables.

Give Yourself A Fibre Boost

Experts recommend that we increase our daily intake to 25-35 grams of fibre. Here are some ways to add extra grams of fibre to your diet.

- Sprinkle 2 tbsp. all-bran or 100% bran cereal on your regular cereal: +3 grams
- Eat a whole orange instead of orange juice at breakfast: +2 grams
- Add ½ cup drained canned kidney beans to your pasta salad or green salad for lunch: +6 grams
- For a snack, instead of cookies, have 6 graham crackers: +1 gram
- Have 1 cup brown long-grain rice instead of white rice as a side dish or in casseroles: +3 grams

Top Ten Fibre Tips

- 1) Begin your day with whole grain breads or cereals such as rye bread, whole wheat bread, bran flakes, shredded wheat, or oatmeal.
- 2) Thicken soups and stews with barley, brown rice, legumes, and vegetables.
- 3) Add bran, rolled oats, or whole grain cereal to ground beef for meatloaf, hamburgers, or add to coating for fish and poultry.
- 4) Enjoy potatoes in their skins.
- 5) Experiment with cooked legumes in casseroles and salads.
- 6) Add bran, oatmeal, raisins, nuts, seeds and pieces of fruit to muffins, bread and cookies.
- 7) Grab a carrot or a bran muffin.
- 8) Spread peanut butter on celery or on a whole wheat cracker.
- 9) Dip unpeeled fresh fruit wedges and vegetable sticks in a yogurt dip.
- 10) Grab a handful of nuts and seeds.

