



Joan Kortbein
Registered Dietitian
Certified Diabetes Educator

Years ago when we heard about dietary fiber it was only to treat constipation - it was something only grandma needed to eat. How times have changed! **Today we appreciate fiber for the many health benefits it provides including:**

- lower cholesterol levels and lower risk for heart disease.
- may reduce risk of several forms of cancer including colorectal.
- improved blood sugars because foods higher in fiber don't raise the blood sugar as high or as fast as more processed carbohydrate foods.
- weight control as foods higher in fiber take longer to digest, tend to contain fewer calories, and take longer to eat (eating an apple takes longer to eat than drinking apple juice) – all of which provide more of a sense of fullness.

SOURCES

Fiber can be found in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds and legumes. Foods high in fiber are also generally higher in vitamins, minerals, phytochemical and antioxidants while being low in sodium and fat (saturated and trans).



HOW MUCH SHOULD WE EAT?

Women 18-50 years	Women 51+ years	Men 18-50 years	Men 51 + years
25 grams/day or more	21 grams/day or more	30-38 grams or more	30 grams/day or more

It is important to gradually increase the fiber in your diet. If you add too much, too quickly you may experience bloating, increased gas, and cramping. Try increasing fiber in your diet by about five grams every five days as a general guide, but if you have other bowel conditions you may need to go more slowly.

INCREASING FIBER IN OUR DIET – SIMPLE SUBSTITUTIONS

<i>Instead of this...</i>	<i>Try this...</i>
1 cup white rice = 1.4 g fiber	1 cup brown rice = 3.5 g fiber
1 cup orange juice = 0g fiber	1 medium orange = 3.4 g fiber
1 cup farina = 1.7 g fiber	1 cup oatmeal = 4 g fiber
¼ cup raisins = 1.3 g fiber	1 cup fresh raspberries = 8 g fiber
1 chewy granola bar = 1 g fiber	1 ounce almonds (about 23) = 3.5 g fiber
1 ounce (about 15) potato chips = 1 g fiber	3 cups lite popcorn = 3.5 g fiber
1 cup iceberg lettuce = less than 1 g fiber	1 cup fresh spinach = 4 g fiber