

Fiber



A registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) can help you set specific nutrition goals and guide you in planning a personalized healthy eating pattern.

To find an RDN in your area, visit "Find an Expert" at www.eatright.org



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Fiber is found naturally in plant foods, including fruits, vegetables, beans and peas, grains, nuts, and seeds. The fiber we get from food is often called *dietary fiber*. Although our bodies do not fully digest dietary fiber, it has important roles in keeping us healthy. An eating plan that includes plenty of dietary fiber offers health benefits you'll feel today and over your lifetime!

How much fiber do I need?

Dietary fiber is important throughout life. Most Americans only get half the fiber they need each day. The following chart show how much fiber is needed at different ages and stages of life.

Recommended Fiber per Day (grams)

Age (years)	Males	Females
1-3	19	19
4-8	25	25
9-13	31	26
14-18	38	26
19-50	38	25
50+	30	21

What does fiber do for my body?

Dietary fiber is essential and contributes to your health and wellness in many ways. Here are some of the ways that a fiber-rich eating plan can be good for you.



Fiber lowers blood cholesterol levels

Eating certain foods with fiber, such as beans, oats, barley, and nuts, helps lower cholesterol levels, which can protect against heart disease. Fiber containing foods also have other heart-healthy benefits: they are usually lower in fat or contain healthy fats, and they contain other nutrients.

Fiber helps control blood sugar levels

Eating meals and snacks with fiber can help you maintain healthy blood glucose levels. This is especially important for people with diabetes.

Fiber promotes digestive health

The fiber in whole grain foods and vegetables helps prevent constipation by adding bulk and helping waste move through the body, which also lowers the risk of hemorrhoids. For people who suffer frequent diarrhea with irritable bowel syndrome, the fiber found in beans, lentils, oats, and some fruits and vegetables may be helpful. Certain types of fiber also help to increase the healthy bacteria in your digestive tract.

Fiber helps you manage your weight

Eating plenty of fiber containing foods, such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, helps fill you up. Fiber also makes you feel full longer, so you may eat less overall. A fiber-rich eating plan is often lower in calories, too.

Fiber may help protect against cancer

An eating plan that contains plenty of fiber may help lower the risk for certain types of cancer, especially colorectal cancer and gastric cancer.