

High Fiber Diet

General information:

What is it? A high fiber diet contains foods that have a lot of fiber. Fiber is the part of fruits, vegetables and grains that is not broken down by your body. A high fiber diet will add bulk and softness to your bowel movements. (BM's). This diet may help if you have constipation, high cholesterol, or diabetes. Your caregiver may want you to eat more fiber if you have diverticulosis or irritable bowel syndrome.

What can I do to make a high fiber diet a part of my lifestyle?

Changing what you eat may be hard at first. Think of these changes as "lifestyle" changes, not just "diet". You may need to make these changes part of your daily routine. Following a high fiber diet may help you feel better.

- Choose a variety of items on this diet to avoid getting tired of having the same items every day. Keep a list of foods that are good sources of fiber in your kitchen to remind you about the diet.
- Below are some ways that you can increase the fiber in your diet:

Eat a high fiber cereal for breakfast. Look for cereals that have bran or fiber in the name.

Eat whole grain breads such as whole wheat bread. Whole wheat, whole wheat flour, or other grains should be listed as the first ingredient on the food label.

Choose whole grain products such as brown rice, barley and whole wheat pasta.

Add bran cereal or wheat bran to baked products. Replace white flour with whole grain flour or use half of each when baking bread. Whole grain flour is heavier than white flour. You may have to add more yeast or baking powder to your recipe.

Add beans, peas and lentils (small dried beans that are cooked) to your diet. You can do this by adding beans to soups or salads.

Eat at least five different servings of fruits and vegetables each day. You can add fruits to your diet by eating them during meals and snacks. You can add vegetables to your meals as a side dish or add them to main dishes such as soups or pastas. You can also eat fruits or vegetables as a snack.

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Ask your dietitian or nutritionist any questions you may have about your diet plan. A dietitian or nutritionist can help to find the right diet plan for you. Dietitians or nutritionists can also help to make your new diet a regular part of your life.

What foods are good sources of fiber?

The amount of fiber that adults should have in their diet is about 20-35 grams per day. Talk to your dietician, nutritionist or caregiver about the amount that you should have in your diet.

Each of the following high-fiber foods have five or more grams of fiber:

Five dried prunes

One third cup of All Bran

One cup of blueberries

One half cup of cooked barley

One half cup of cooked dried beans, peas, or legumes

One third cup of Fiber One

One half cup of fresh or canned green peas

One half cup of whole wheat pasta

One medium raw apple with skin

One medium raw pear with skin

One ounce of almonds

Ten figs or dates

Ten pods of snowpeas

Three cups of air popped popcorn

- **Each of the following medium fiber foods have two to four grams of fiber**

One half of a cooked potato with skin

One half cup of cooked brown rice

One half cup of fresh or frozen broccoli

One half cup of Grape Nuts Flakes

One cup of oatmeal

One half cup of raw carrots

One third cup of (bite size) Shredded Wheat

One cup of strawberries

One medium raw apple with no skin

One slice of rye bread

One slice of whole wheat bread

One small bran muffin

One small orange

One half of a sweet potato with skin

Three graham wafers

Two tablespoons of smooth, crunchy peanut butter

What other diet guidelines should I follow?

- Add fiber to your diet slowly. Adding a lot of fiber to your diet too quickly may cause abdominal (stomach) discomfort, bloating or gas.

- Drink plenty of liquids when adding fiber to your diet. You should drink at least eight cups of water per day. If you do not drink enough water, you may have constipation.
- Caregivers may suggest that you use a fiber powder or pill to decrease constipation. Eating a high fiber diet is a healthier way to decrease constipation, and to keep your BM's regular. Fiber rich foods provide extra vitamins and minerals that these powders and pills do not provide.
- Check with your caregiver before using over the counter products to help bloating or abdominal discomfort. Tablets or liquid drops like Beano can decrease gas formation. Products that contain simethicone can break up larger gas bubbles and decrease your symptoms.

Risks:

- Adding fiber to your diet too quickly can cause gas and bloating. Fiber works best when you drink plenty of liquids, you may have constipation.
- If you have diverticulosis, your caregiver may suggest that you not eat any type of seeds or foods with seeds. Some examples of these foods are almonds, peanut butter, popcorn and sesame seeds. Talk to your caregiver about seeds in your diet.

Care agreement:

You have the right to help plan your care. To help with this plan, you must learn about your diet. You can then discuss treatment options with your caregivers. Work with them to decide what care may be used to treat you. You always have the right to refuse treatment.