



Simple Steps to a Higher-Fiber Diet

Increasing fiber intake is relatively easy, and, thanks to new ingredients and processes, it also tastes better than ever before.

The following tips provide a few ideas on how to start increasing daily fiber intake.

Boosting Fiber at Breakfast

The saying that 'breakfast is the most important meal of the day' is a great motto to follow. Breakfast provides fuel after the overnight fast to help wake up the body and mind. Eating a breakfast rich in carbohydrate foods (such as breakfast cereals, toast or bagels) has been found to help both adults and children concentrate in the morning; help children learn better when at school; boost mood and feeling of well-being; and help with weight management.

Breakfast cereals are an easy way to boost fiber. Simply switch to a cereal that is at least a good source of fiber. Try to also include at least one of the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables a day with this meal.

Some other tips include:

- Add chopped fresh or dried fruit, nuts, or seeds to breakfast cereals and yogurt.
- Try a fruit smoothie instead of a glass of fruit juice. Juice contains no fiber and smoothies can have as much as 3g per glass.
- If you eat toast, make sure the bread has both whole grains and fiber.

Super Snacks

Snacks make an important contribution to daily intakes of vitamins and minerals, and provide a great chance to get more fiber. Think about snacks when shopping to make sure you have lots of tasty, healthy choices. Try to plan ahead and pack a healthy snack option. Great choices include:

- Popcorn.
- Fruit.
- Dried fruit and nut mixes.
- High-fiber crackers or cereal bars.
- Chopped vegetables and hummus dip.
- Bean/corn salsa with baked tortilla chips.
- And don't forget, a bowl of high-fiber cereal also makes a great snack.



Lunchtime Treats

While we are rushing our way through each busy day, it can be difficult to come up with easy ways of grabbing a quick healthy meal. Taking time to eat a meal will help re-energize and cause stress levels to drop, so you are ready to face the rest of the day.

Don't always limit yourself to sandwiches. Here are some great suggestions for a fiber-full lunch.

- A bowl of vegetable or bean soup boosts fiber.
- A cup of yogurt topped with fruit and cereal is a great choice.
- Baked potatoes, especially sweet potatoes, make a tasty choice. Remember to eat the skin, too.
- Enjoy a small salad with a sandwich, and top it with some bran cereal for an extra crunch.
- Use hummus or black bean dip as a sandwich spread in place of mayonnaise or mustard.

Dinnertime

With more Americans working full-time, it seems there is less time available to prepare meals. Here are some quick and easy ways to boost fiber in the dinner menu.

- Always include vegetables or a mixed greens salad, and add sliced or dried fruit.
- When making soup, add vegetables and beans to the recipe.
- When a recipe calls for breadcrumbs, use whole-grain breadcrumbs with fiber, or mix plain breadcrumbs with crushed bran cereal.
- Experiment with higher-fiber foods such as refried beans or chickpeas.
- Chili isn't the only way to enjoy beans, try adding different beans to casseroles and stews.
- Add extra vegetables to tomato sauce by grating in carrots or other vegetables and cooking for 10 minutes or until soft.
- Brown rice may take longer to cook than white rice, but it has a great nutty taste and can be used in most dishes in place of white rice. And there are several great tasting instant brown rice products as well.
- If you're eating dinner especially late, a cereal that is at least a good source of fiber is a terrific choice.

Desserts

Many people enjoy finishing a meal with something sweet. Here are a few simple ways to increase fiber in desserts.

- For homemade baked goods, replace white flour with a 50:50 mix of white and whole-wheat flours. And you can add some wheat bran as well.
- Sprinkle fruit with cereal for extra crunch.
- Core an apple and stuff it with chopped dates and honey, dried apricots and almonds, or banana and walnuts, and a little wheat bran – place in an ovenproof dish with two to four tablespoons of water and bake at 350° for approximately 30 minutes or until the apple is tender.

Remember

Foods made with whole grain don't always provide a good source of fiber. Look at the Nutrition Facts Panel to find foods that are good (at least 10 percent DV) or excellent (at least 20 percent DV) sources of fiber.

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