

PATIENT INFORMATION

HIGH FIBRE DIET



What is Fibre?

Fibre, or roughage, refers to the parts of fruit, vegetables and grains that cannot be digested by your stomach. It does not contain any calories, minerals or vitamins, but it is important as part of a healthy balanced diet.

How does fibre work?

There are two types of fibre found in our diet; **soluble fibre** and **insoluble fibre**:

- **Soluble fibre** – this type of fibre dissolves in water to form a gel-like material which slows digestion and makes you fuller for longer. Good sources include oats, barley, rye, peas and beans, lentils, fruits and vegetables;
- **Insoluble fibre** – this type of fibre does not dissolve in water and is left intact as food moves through the digestive system. It adds bulk to stools and absorbs water, makes your stools soft and easier to pass and helps you to form healthy, regular bowel habits. Good sources include wholegrain foods, whole wheat flour, nuts, flaxseeds, fruits and vegetables with skins and pips.

It is important to include both types of fibre in your diet to give the greatest health benefit.

Health benefits of a high fibre diet:

- Preventing constipation;
- Lowering the risk of diverticular disease (small pouches in your colon) and colon cancer;
- Lowering the risk of haemorrhoids or piles (swollen blood vessels in your back passage), diverticulitis and irritable bowel syndrome;
- Reducing blood cholesterol: soluble fibre prevents some dietary cholesterol from being broken down and digested. Over time, this can help lower the level of free cholesterol in blood;
- Stabilising blood sugar level: Just as it prevents fats from being absorbed, soluble fibre slows down the digestion of sugar and starch which prevent sharp spikes in blood glucose levels.

How much fibre do I need?

In 2015 the government published new guidelines with a recommendation that the population's fibre intake should increase to **30g a day for adults (aged 17 years and over)**. On average, we consume much less than this – about 18g per day. Children also need to increase their fibre intake.

Recommended intakes of fibre are shown below:

Age (years)	Recommended intake of fibre
2-5	15g / day
5-11	20g / day
11-16	25g / day
17 and over	30g / day

How can I increase the amount of fibre I eat?

Good sources of fibre are products that are often labelled as “wholemeal” or “wholegrain”.

- **Bread** – wholemeal, granary or seeded wholegrain breads.
- **Bread based products** – wholemeal scones, muffins, malt loaf and fruit loaf. If your family only typically likes to use white flour for baking, why not try the versions that combine white and wholemeal flours as a start.
- **Breakfast cereals** – Weetabix, All-bran, Branflakes, Fruit & Fibre, Shreddies, Shredded Wheat, Weetos, porridge oats, cereal and muesli bars. Look for ‘high fibre’ on the pack.
- **Biscuits** – Hob-Nobs, Digestives, Garibaldi, flapjacks, oatcakes, Ryvita and other oat or wholemeal biscuits.
- **Brown rice** and **whole wheat pasta, Chapattis** made with medium or brown flour, wholemeal pitta and naan bread
- **Fruit and vegetables** – Aim to eat **5 portions** of fruits and vegetables a day, 1 portion is 80g. This will help you reach the recommended fibre intake, as well as providing you with lots of vitamins and minerals. **Tinned, frozen or dried fruit and vegetables** all count and they don’t have to be eaten on their own, for example, vegetables used in soups, sandwiches or as pizza toppings all count towards your 5-a-day.
- **Pulses, beans and lentils** – split peas, chick peas, kidney beans.
- **Potatoes with skin**
- **Nuts** – avoid excessive amounts of nuts as they can be high in fat and salt. 1 portion is 30g; approximately a small cupped, handful.

If your aim is to maintain a healthy weight or lose weight, it is important to limit higher calorie and fat options as part of a healthy balanced diet.

High Fibre Meal Ideas

Breakfast

- Shreddies with dried fruit
- Wholemeal toast
- Fruit: fresh, stewed, dried or tinned in natural juice

Main meals

- Jacket potato with tuna and sweetcorn
- Chilli con carne with kidney beans
- Whole wheat spaghetti bolognaise (add vegetables)
- Roast beef with peas, broccoli, carrots and new potatoes (boiled in their skins)
- Grilled or baked fish with sweetcorn, salad and potato wedges

Desserts

- Fruit: fresh, stewed, dried or tinned in natural juice
- Fruit pie or crumble made with wholemeal flour
- Wholemeal bread and butter pudding with raisins

Snack meals

- Baked beans on wholemeal toast
- Lentil & vegetable soup with wholemeal roll
- Jacket potato with chickpeas and tomatoes

Snacks

- Veggie sticks (carrots, cucumber) with hummus
- Fruit, dried fruit and nuts, wholemeal scone, fruit cake, cereal bar, flapjack or oatcake

A healthy, balanced diet can provide enough fibre – especially if you eat your 5-a-day, potatoes in skins and choose wholegrain foods. **A 7-day meal planner that meets fibre recommendations can be found here:**

<https://www.nutrition.org.uk/attachments/article/881/SACN%20guidelines%20meal%20planner.pdf>

Below is an example of foods that together provide more than the recommended amount of fibre over a day (for an adult).

Meal	Food	Portion	Fibre content (g)
Breakfast	Bran flakes	40g	8
	1 banana, sliced	100g	1.5
Snack	Apple	100g	2.4
Lunch	Baked beans	150g	6.8
	Wholemeal toast (2 slices)	70g	4.7
Evening meal	Jacket potato with tuna mayonnaise and sweetcorn	180g	6.5
	Salad (lettuce, tomato and cucumber)	138g	1.7
	Low fat yoghurt (with strawberries)	150g	1.5
Total fibre intake:			33.1

Tips for increasing your fibre

- **Drink plenty of fluids** – For the fibre to work, you need to drink enough fluids throughout the day. These fluids will be absorbed into your stools helping them to become soft and easy to pass. **Aim to drink 6-8 cups of fluid (around 2L litres) per day at regular intervals.** Water, lower-fat milk and lower-sugar or sugar-free drinks, including tea and coffee, all count.



- **Increase your fibre intake gradually** – do not have large amounts of fibre one day and little the next. Increasing your fibre intake suddenly can cause wind, bloating and stomach upset. Make one change at a time, for example, swapping cornflakes for branflakes and let your body adjust before making other changes. This will help to avoid or reduce any symptoms.
- **Be active!** – Physically active individuals have demonstrated a lower prevalence of constipation compared to physically inactive individuals. Exercising regularly helps to stimulate the natural contraction of intestinal muscles which help move stools out quickly. Aim for at least **150 minutes** of moderate-intensity activity per week (brisk walking, house cleaning, swimming) or **75 minutes** of vigorous-intensity activity per week (hiking, bicycling, football /basketball game).
- **Food Labels** – Most food labels give the amount of fibre per serving or per 100g. Counting up every gram is not necessary, but food labels can be helpful to make comparisons with similar products and make healthier choices.
 - For a food to claim that it is a “source of fibre”, there should be at least 3g of fibre per 100g or 1.5g of fibre per 100 kcal.
 - For a food to claim that it is a “high fibre” food, it should contain at least 6g of fibre per 100g or 3g of fibre per 100 kcal.

Notes:

Given out by Registered Dietitian:

Name:

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If your symptoms or condition worsens, or if you are concerned about anything, please call your GP, 111, or 999.

Patient Experience

We know that being admitted to hospital can be a difficult and unsettling time for you and your loved ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do speak with a member of staff on the ward or in the relevant department who will do their best to answer your questions and reassure you.

Feedback

Feedback is really important and useful to us – it can tell us where we are working well and where improvements can be made. There are lots of ways you can share your experience with us including completing our Friends and Family Test – cards are available and can be posted on all wards, departments and clinics at our hospitals. We value your comments and feedback and thank you for taking the time to share this with us.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

If you have any concerns or questions about your care, we advise you to talk with the nurse in charge or the department manager in the first instance as they are best placed to answer any questions or resolve concerns quickly. If the relevant member of staff is unable to help resolve your concern, you can contact the PALS Team. We offer informal help, advice or support about any aspect of hospital services & experiences.

Our PALS team will liaise with the various departments in our hospitals on your behalf, if you feel unable to do so, to resolve your problems and where appropriate refer to outside help.

If you are still unhappy you can contact the Complaints Department, who can investigate your concerns. You can make a complaint orally, electronically or in writing and we can advise and guide you through the complaints procedure.

How to contact PALS:

Telephone Patient Services: 0300 123 1732 or via email at: wah-tr.PALS@nhs.net

Opening times:

The PALS telephone lines are open Monday to Thursday from 8.30am to 4.30pm and Friday: 8.30am to 4.00pm. Please be aware that a voicemail service is in use at busy times, but messages will be returned as quickly as possible.

If you are unable to understand this leaflet, please communicate with a member of staff.