

Getting enough fiber?

NORAH OTIENO-WASONGA, MS, RD, LDN

What is Fiber?

Dietary fiber, which is also known as roughage, is only found in plants. This is a plant cell material and is in form of carbohydrate or starch. The reason why it's called roughage or bulk is because dietary fiber cannot be digested or absorbed in the human intestines.

Types of Dietary Fiber

Soluble Fiber

Is able to dissolve in water. It mixes with food to form a gel by absorbing water. It also slows down the emptying of the stomach & food movement through the intestines, which can help prevent dramatic increases in blood sugar. Some examples are fruits, oats, legumes, barley.

Insoluble Fiber

Does not dissolve in water. It stays unchanged as it moves down the digestive system. Insoluble fiber helps with preventing constipation. Some examples are: cereals; wheat bran; seeds, fruit, stalks, peels, and vegetables.

Benefits of Fiber

- Helps in having a regular and smooth bowel movement prevents constipation.
- Reduces risk of bowel cancer
- Helps in maintaining normal blood cholesterol levels.
- Reduces blood glucose level
- Helps in controlling caloric intake



How much do you need?

For adults, 20 to 30 grams of fiber is recommended with an upper limit of 35 grams. The % Daily Value on the nutrition facts label is based on 12.5 grams of dietary fiber per 1,000 calories or 25 grams of fiber for a 2,000-calorie diet. On average, most adults in the United States only consume 15 grams of fiber a day. This is not enough at all!

Specific recommendations per day are:

Women: 25 grams (18-50 years old).

Women: 21 grams (51 years old & older).

Men: 30 to 38 grams.

Some Good Sources of Fiber

This list is not all inclusive. Other foods can contain fiber.

Legumes

Kidney, black, white, or other beans, lentils, peas etc.

Nuts & Seeds

Nuts: Almonds, cashews, pistachio etc.

Seeds: chia, flax, pumpkin, sunflower etc.

Vegetables

Carrots, broccoli, pumpkin, etc.

Fruits

Banana, papaya, guava, avocado, berries, dried fruits (prunes, dates, raisins)

Whole Grains

Oats, rice (brown, wild), bread

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	2/3 cup (55g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	230
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	10%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	13%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 240mg	6%
* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	