

High-Fiber Diet

What is a high-fiber diet?

Dietary fiber is part of the plant that provides and maintains the plant structure. Multiple types of fiber are chemically unrelated; however, the one thing they have in common is that the human body can't digest them. For this reason, they can help correct disorders of the large intestine (colon) and keep it functioning normally. Therefore, increasing the amount of fiber in the diet is important. The goal is 20-35 grams per day with an increase in fiber rich foods and/or fiber supplements.

Why order a high-fiber diet?

Fiber (roughage or bulk) promotes the wavelike contractions that keep food moving through the intestine. Fibrous substances pass through the intestine undigested and absorb their weight in water, resulting in softer and bulkier stools. High fiber is believed to aid in harmful substances being swept out before they can cause problems, which helps by avoiding, halting, or even reversing some digestive tract disorders.

Benefits of a high-fiber diet

Following a high-fiber diet leads to bulkier and softer stools which cause less pressure in the colon. It can help with chronic constipation, maintaining a healthy weight; prevention of heart disease, diabetes, and high cholesterol; and essential in the treatments of hemorrhoids, diverticulosis/diverticulitis, colorectal cancer, and irritable bowel syndrome.

High-fiber foods versus fiber supplements

Some people don't tolerate fibrous foods well. If you can't consume enough fiber in your diet alone, certain stool softening and bulking agents are available. These products absorb water and produce the bulk necessary for the digestive tract to perform naturally.

Examples of High-fiber foods and supplements

Fruits	Vegetables	Grains	Supplements
Artichokes	Beans (baked, black, lima, pinto)	Barley	Benefiber® (wheat dextrin)
Apples (with skin)	Broccoli	Bread, Muffins (whole wheat)	Metamucil® (psyllium)
Bananas	Carrots	Cereals (bran, oatmeal, shredded wheat)	Konsyl® (psyllium)
Berries (blackberries, blueberries, raspberries)	Chick-peas	Coconut	Citrucel® (methylcellulose)
Dates	Lentils	Crackers (rye, whole wheat)	Fiberco® (SmartFiber derived from cellulose)
Figs	Parsnips Peas	Nuts (almonds, peanuts, pecans, walnuts)	FiberChoice® (inulin)
Grapes	Pumpkin	Oats	
Pears (with skin)	Rutabaga	Rice (brown)	
Prunes	Squash (winter)	Seeds (pumpkin, sunflower)	

Tips:

- Always increase fluids when you increase fiber (water, broth, juice).
- Increase fiber levels in your diet gradually.
- Use insoluble fiber if issues of gas and bloating is a problem.
- Eating high-fiber foods is a healthy choice for most people. If you have ever received medical treatment for a digestive problem, check with your doctor to find out if a high-fiber diet is the right choice for you.