

Understanding fiber for optimal digestion

Toll-free support line 7 days a week

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Fiber is an essential component of a healthy diet and offers numerous health benefits for men, particularly in improving intestinal health and reducing the risk of constipation.

They are carbohydrates that cannot be absorbed by the intestine. Their ability to retain water leads to swelling and softening of the food bolus, thus promoting faster and easier digestion. Additionally, their low fat and calorie content make them allies for weight control, while their satiating effect delays the feeling of hunger. Fiber also contributes to cholesterol control, thereby reducing the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

Recommended intake for men*

- 19 to 50: 38 g of fiber/day
- 51 and older: 30 g of fiber/day

When deciding to increase fiber intake, here are 2 tips to follow**

- Gradually add fiber-rich foods to your diet to avoid digestive problems.
- Ensure you drink enough water to facilitate fiber digestion.

Two types of dietary fiber exist

Water-Soluble Fiber

Water-soluble fibers are types of dietary fibers that partially or completely dissolve in water when ingested. Once dissolved, they form a viscous gel in the gastrointestinal tract.

These fibers are mainly found in foods such as fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, and seeds. They are known to help lower blood cholesterol levels, regulate blood sugar, promote intestinal health by nourishing good intestinal bacteria, and contribute to the feeling of fullness. Here are a few sources:

- 1. Oats:** Oats are an excellent source of soluble fiber, especially beta-glucans, which are beneficial for cardiovascular health.
- 2. Legumes:** Beans, lentils, peas, and chickpeas contain soluble fibers, in addition to their other beneficial nutrients.
- 3. Fruits:** Some fruits are rich in soluble fibers, including citrus fruits (such as oranges and grapefruits), apples, berries (such as strawberries, blueberries, and raspberries), and pears.
- 4. Vegetables:** Vegetables like carrots, sweet potatoes, zucchinis, and broccolis contain soluble fibers, in addition to their insoluble fiber content.
- 5. Seeds:** Flax seeds and chia seeds are rich in soluble fibers, as well as omega-3 fatty acids and other essential nutrients.
- 6. Pectin:** Pectin is a soluble fiber found in apples, strawberries, citrus fruits, and other fruits. It is often used as a thickener in the preparation of jellies and jams.

* Source: *Institute of Medicine*

** Consult a healthcare professional before making significant changes to your diet, especially if undergoing medical treatments.



Insoluble fiber

Insoluble fibers are types of dietary fibers that do not dissolve in water and maintain their shape and texture in the gastrointestinal tract. Unlike soluble fibers, they do not form a gel when they come into contact with water.

These fibers are often found in foods such as whole grains, root vegetables, leafy green vegetables, and fruits with edible skins. They contribute to digestive health by promoting regular bowel movements and preventing constipation. Additionally, insoluble fibers can help control appetite by adding bulk to stools, which promotes a feeling of fullness. Some sources include:

- 1. Wheat bran:** It is one of the richest sources of insoluble fibers. It can be found in raw wheat bran or in some cereal products.
- 2. Whole grains:** Wheat bran, oat bran and other whole grains like brown rice, barley, and quinoa are good sources of insoluble fibers.
- 3. Green vegetables:** Vegetables such as spinach, kale, cabbage, broccoli and green beans are rich in insoluble fibers.
- 4. Seeds:** Flax seeds, chia seeds, sunflower seeds and sesame seeds are good sources of insoluble fibers.
- 5. Edible skin fruits:** Fruits like apples, pears, prunes, berries and grapes are rich in insoluble fibers, especially when consumed with their skin.
- 6. Legumes:** Beans, lentils, chickpeas and peas are also sources of insoluble fibers, although they also contain soluble fibers.

Most fibrous foods contain both soluble and insoluble fibers. All can be incorporated into various dishes, such as salads, soups, smoothies, cereals, bread, and meal accompaniments. In some cases, it might be advisable to consult a healthcare professional or a nutritionist for specific recommendations tailored to your individual needs, taking into account your dietary preferences and any potential medical restrictions.

Our health care professionals are here 7 days a week to answer all your questions as well as those of your family. Call **1 855 899-2873** or visit **procure.ca**

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