

# Healthy Eating Guidelines for Increasing your Fibre Intake



This fact sheet provides tips on how to add more fibre-rich foods in your diet. There are different kinds of fibre found in foods such as vegetables, fruit, legumes (peas, beans, lentils) and whole grains and cereals.

Some fibre can help to lower blood cholesterol and control blood glucose (sugar) levels. This is called soluble fibre and is found in some vegetables and fruit and legumes. Other types of fibre, called insoluble fibre from some vegetables and fruit, whole grains and wheat bran, help keep your bowels regular and can improve constipation.

It is important to eat a variety of foods to get enough of both types of fibre. A healthy diet includes 25-38 grams of fibre a day. Talk to a dietitian if you want help on increasing the dietary fibre in your diet.

## Steps You Can Take

Most people can meet their fibre needs by eating a variety of healthy foods including vegetables and fruits, whole grains, legumes like dried beans, peas and lentils, nuts and seeds. See [Canada's Food Guide](#) for more information on serving sizes and number of servings.

### Grains

- Eat at least six servings of whole grain products every day. Examples include rolled oats, Barley, brown rice, quinoa and whole wheat breads, breakfast cereals and pasta.
- Use whole grain bread, rolls, pita or bagels when making toast or sandwiches.
- Replace at least half of the white flour with whole-wheat flour in your recipes.
- Add 15-30 mL (1-2 Tbsp) of bran, ground flax seed or a very high fibre cereal to your cereal in the morning.



## Vegetables and Fruit

- Eat at least seven servings of vegetables and fruit every day. Aim for 1-2 servings of fruit and vegetables at every meal and snack.
- Eat the peels of your vegetables and fruits whenever possible.
- Try having fruit as a snack or as a dessert. Pears, raspberries and blackberries are top choices for fibre. Guav, persimmon and kumquat are exotic high fibre fruits worth trying.
- Eat vegetables and fruit instead of drinking juice.

## Legumes

- Add barley, beans, peas or lentils to soups, stews and casseroles. For example, add black beans to spaghetti sauce or lentils to soup.
- Roast chickpeas or steam edemame (soybeans in a pod) for an easy snack.
- Use legume-based dips (ex: hummus, white or black bean dip) for veggies instead of sour cream based.

## Nuts and Seeds

- Add toasted nuts, sesame seeds, sunflower or pumpkin seeds to salads and cereals.
- Sprinkle on pasta dishes and stir-fries.
- Grab a handful of nuts (60 mL (1/4 cup) as a quick snack.

## Read Food Labels

- Compare products and pick the one with the most fibre. Be sure you are comparing the same serving sizes.
- Check for grams of fibre. High-fibre foods have four or more grams of fibre per serving.
- Look for ingredients such as bran, whole grain whole wheat, oatmeal or rye flour.
- Increase the fibre in your diet slowly to avoid gas, bloating and diarrhea.



- Divide fibre-containing foods throughout the day at both meals and snacks.
- Drink plenty of fluids.

Here is an example of how to increase your fibre intake with only a few small changes:

| Low Fibre Diet                           | Fibre (g) | Fibre (g) | High Fibre Diet                          |
|--|-----------|-----------|--|
| Breakfast                                |           |           | Breakfast                                |
| 175 mL (¾ cup) flaked corn cereal (30 g) | 1.3       | 4.6       | 125 mL (½ cup) flaked bran cereal (30 g) |
| 250 mL (1 cup) low fat milk              | 0.0       | 0.0       | 250 mL (1 cup) low fat milk              |
| 1 slice white toast (35 g)               | 1.3       | 2.5       | 1 slice whole wheat toast (35 g)         |
| 15 mL (1 Tbsp) jam                       | 0.2       | 0.9       | 15 mL (1 Tbsp) peanut butter             |
| 125 mL (½ cup) orange juice              | 0.3       | 3.1       | 1 small orange (140 g)                   |
| Lunch                                    |           |           | Lunch                                    |
| 2 slices white bread (70 g)              | 2.6       | 3         | 2 slices whole wheat bread (70 g)        |
| 75 g light tuna                          | 0.0       | 0.0       | 75 g light tuna                          |
| 15 mL (1 Tbsp) light mayonnaise          | 0.0       | 0.0       | 15 mL (1 Tbsp) light mayonnaise          |
| 1 medium leaf lettuce (10 g)             | 0.1       | 0.1       | 1 medium leaf lettuce (10 g)             |
| ½ tomato, sliced (62 g)                  | 0.8       | 0.8       | ½ tomato, sliced (62 g)                  |
| 125 mL (½ cup) vanilla yogurt (135 g)    | 0.0       | 0.0       | 125 mL (½ cup) vanilla yogurt (135 g)    |
|  |           | 2.1       | 60 mL (¼ cup) raspberries                |
| Snack                                    |           |           | Snack                                    |
| 1 small apple (140 g)                    | 3.6       | 5.5       | 1 small pear (166 g)                     |
| Water                                    |           |           | Water                                    |



|                                      |        |        |   |
|--------------------------------------|--------|--------|---|
| Supper                               |        |        | Supper                                      |
| 75 g baked chicken breast            | 1.0    | 1.0    | 75 g baked chicken breast                   |
| 125 mL (½ cup) mashed potato (110 g) | 1.6    | 4.0    | 1 medium baked potato with skin (173 g)     |
| 125 mL (½ cup) carrots (82 g)        | 2.2    | 2.2    | 125 mL (½ cup) carrots (82 g)               |
| 250 mL (1 cup) low fat milk          | 0.0    | 1.2    | 250 mL (1 cup) romaine lettuce salad (60 g) |
| 125 mL (½ cup) vanilla pudding       | 0.0    | 0.0    | 250 mL (1 cup) low fat milk                 |
|                                      |        | 1.3    | 125 mL (½ cup) fruit cocktail               |
| Snack                                |        |        | Snack                                       |
| 4 melba toast crackers (20 g)        | 1.3    | 2.4    | ½ whole wheat pita (32 g)                   |
| 1 oz. cheddar cheese (30 g)          | 0.0    | 2.5    | 60 mL (¼ cup) hummus                        |
| 125 mL (½ cup) grapes                | 1.0    | 1.0    | 125 mL (½ cup) grapes                       |
| Water                                |        |        | Water                                       |
|                                      |        |        |   |
| Total Fibre                          | 17.3 g | 38.2 g | Total Fibre                                 |

Source: "Canadian Nutrient File 2010"

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/fiche-nutri-data/index-eng.php>

[Accessed September 21, 2012]



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