

**Fiber**

**What is fiber?**

Fiber is a part of plant food that has many health benefits.

**What does fiber do?**

It depends on the type of fiber. There are two types:

- **Insoluble fiber** or “roughage,” is found in fruit and vegetable skins, whole wheat products, brown rice, barley, popcorn, quinoa, and wheat bran. This type of fiber acts as a laxative and adds bulk to stool. This helps relieve constipation and prevent colon disease and hemorrhoids.
- **Soluble fiber** is found in most fruits and vegetables, and barley, oatmeal, oat bran, and dried peas and beans (legumes). It attracts water and forms a gel, which slows down digestion. This helps improve blood sugar and cholesterol levels.

Most foods have some of both types of fiber, but the amounts vary.

Fiber can help you lose weight. The added bulk helps you feel full. Foods with fiber take longer to chew, which helps slow the pace of eating.

**Do I need to take a fiber supplement?**

Eating many kinds of fiber rich foods each day should provide you with enough fiber. If you cannot eat enough fiber or you have more complex health issues, your health care provider may suggest a fiber pill or powder. Never start a supplement without telling your health care provider first.

**How much fiber should I eat?**

Your health care provider will tell you how much fiber you need. See the table below to see the suggested fiber intake by age.

Gender	Age (years)	Suggested Intake in grams (g)
Women	19-50	25
	50+	21
Men	19-50	38
	50+	30

Aim for at least 5 servings of vegetables and fruits and at least 3 servings of whole grains each day. You may need to adjust your fiber intake based on your health history.

Increase the amount of fiber in your diet slowly. This slow increase prevents stomach aches, bloating, gas, constipation and diarrhea. Fiber and water work together, so drink 8-10 (8 ounce) glasses of fluids daily.

**Compare these two meal plans. Which one is most like your diet?**

Menu Low in Fiber	Menu High in Fiber
<p><b>Breakfast</b> Orange juice Scrambled eggs White toast Milk</p>	<p><b>Breakfast</b> Fresh whole orange Scrambled eggs 100% whole wheat toast Milk</p>
<p><b>Lunch</b> Tomato soup ½ tuna salad on white bread Milk</p>	<p><b>Lunch</b> Minestrone soup ½ tuna salad on 100% whole wheat bread Milk</p>
<p><b>Dinner</b> Baked chicken with noodles Green beans Butterscotch pudding Milk</p>	<p><b>Dinner</b> Chicken/broccoli stir-fry with brown rice Salad Fresh fruit salad Milk</p>

## Fruits

Fruits are grouped by amount of fiber per serving. The serving size is ½ cup unless noted.

### At Least 4 Grams per Serving (fiber rich)

Pear, medium, unpeeled	5.5
Apple, large, unpeeled	5.4
Avocado, raw, cubed	5.0
Dates, 3 dried	4.8
Raspberries	4.0

### 3.0 – 3.9 Grams per Serving

Blackberries	3.8
Orange, 1 medium	3.8
Prunes, 5 dried	3.5
Banana (8-3/4" long)	3.5
Raisins, packed	3.1

### 1.0 – 2.9 Grams per Serving

Apricots, 4 halves	1.2
Strawberries	1.5
Peach, peeled	2.2
Cherries, sweet	1.5
Mango	1.5
Applesauce, cooked	1.5
Tangerine, 1 medium	1.5
Nectarine, 2-1/2"	1.6
Pears, 2 peeled halves	1.7
Kiwi, sliced	2.7

### Under 1 Gram per Serving

Fruit juices	0.2
Mandarin oranges	0.9
Watermelon	0.3
Grapefruit sections	0.4
Olives, 5 green or black	0.4
Honeydew melon	0.5
Grapes, green or red	0.5
Cantaloupe	0.6
Pineapple	0.7
Fruit cocktail, canned	0.9

## Vegetables

Vegetables are grouped by the amount of fiber in a serving. A serving size is ½ cup of fresh vegetables unless noted.

Note: Cooked vegetables often shrink so there are more in a ½ cup cooked portion than a ½ cup raw portion. Therefore, a ½ cup cooked vegetables likely has more fiber than ½ cup raw. Cooking does not decrease the fiber content of a food.

### At Least 4 Grams per Serving

Lima beans	6.6
Kidney beans	5.7
Potato with skin, large	4.6
Green peas	4.4
Edamame	4.0

### 3.0 – 3.9 Grams per Serving

Artichokes	3.8
Sweet potato, peeled, med	3.8
Butternut squash	3.3
Parsnip	3.2
Beets, canned	3.0

### 1.0- 2.9 Grams per Serving

Broccoli	2.6
Rhubarb, cooked	2.4
Mix veg, canned	2.3
Spinach, cooked	2.2
Tomato, 2"	2.2
Carrot, 1 large	2.0
Green beans	2.0
Mushrooms, canned	1.9
Asparagus	1.8
Cauliflower, cooked	1.4
Onions, sliced	1.4
Cabbage, cooked	1.4
Spinach, 2 cups raw	1.3

## Vegetables Continued

### Under 1 Gram per Serving

Peppers, sliced	0.9
Radish	0.9
Potatoes, peeled	0.9
Zucchini	0.9
Celery, medium stalk	0.6
Cucumber, peeled	0.4
Mushrooms, fresh	0.4
Lettuce, ice berg	0.3

### Common Grains and Nuts

The nutrition facts on food labels will list fiber content. Look for the words “100% whole-grain” to find higher fiber food sources.

Almonds ¼ cup	3.5
Wheat bran 2 Tbsp	3.0
Barley, cooked	3.0
Peanuts ¼ cup	3.0
Buckwheat, cooked	2.3
Oatmeal, cooked	2.0
Quinoa, cooked	2.6
Pumpkin seeds 3 Tbsp	2.0
Brown rice, cooked	1.8
Wild rice, cooked	1.5

### More Information

Processed fiber is now being added to many foods to improve the nutrition content of food and attract customers. Foods that naturally contain fiber provide better health benefits. Therefore, we suggest a diet with more legumes, whole grains, fruits and vegetables.

Appearance, texture, or color does not reveal the fiber content of foods. For instance, ½ cup avocado (which has a very smooth texture) contains 5 grams of fiber, while ½ cup of cabbage has less than 1.4 grams. Food labels are a good resource to find out the fiber content. Blending or pureeing foods does not change fiber contents, though juice does not contain fiber.

## Selected Packaged Foods

All Bran Buds 1/3 cup	13.0
Kashi GOLEAN, original 1 cup	10.5
Banza Chickpea Pasta 1 cup cooked	8.0
Special K Protein Bar	5.0
Brownberry Double Fiber Bread 1 slice	5.0
Ronzoni Healthy Harvest Whole Wheat Pasta 1 cup cooked	5.0
Clif Bar	4.0
Food Should Taste Good Black Bean Chips-10	4.0
Dave’s Killer Bread 1 slice	3.0
Ezekiel 4:9 Sprouted Whole Grain Bread 1 slice	3.0
Triscuits-6 crackers	3.0
Cheerios 1 cup	3.0

## Reading Fiber on a Food Label

A serving size tells you how much of a food or a liquid is in 1 serving.

This number tells you how many grams (g) of fiber are in 1 serving.

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Serving Size ½ cup (130g)	
Servings Per Container 3½	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 140	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 0.5g	<b>1%</b>
Saturated Fat 0g	<b>0%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 510mg	<b>21%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 28g	<b>9%</b>
Dietary Fiber 6g	<b>24%</b>
Sugars 11g	
<b>Protein</b> 6g	
Vitamin A 2%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 6%	Iron 10%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	

## **Teach Back**

What is the most important thing you learned from this handout?

What changes will you make in your diet/lifestyle, based on what you learned today?

If you are a UW Health patient and have more questions please contact UW Health at one of the phone numbers listed below. You can also visit our website at [www.uwhealth.org/nutrition](http://www.uwhealth.org/nutrition).

Nutrition clinics for UW Hospital and Clinics (UWHC) and American Family Children's Hospital (AFCH) can be reached at: **(608) 890-5500**.

Nutrition clinics for UW Medical Foundation (UWMF) can be reached at: **(608) 287-2770**.

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright 10/2019 University of Wisconsin Hospital and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#190