

Fibre

What is fibre?

Fibre is the partially or non-digestible part of plant foods. It is found in a wide variety of foods and includes a mixture of soluble and insoluble fibre. Soluble fibre absorbs water and makes your bowel contents softer and easier to pass. Insoluble fibre helps keep us regular.

Why should you eat fibre?

A good fibre intake can help to:

- Lower cholesterol levels
- Keep your bowel habits regular and prevent constipation
- Reduce your risk of getting bowel cancer and heart disease
- Lower postprandial blood glucose levels
- Fill you up (which may help you lose weight)

How much should you eat per day?

Most people do not eat enough fibre. Aim for **30-40 grams** of fibre each day. Increase your fibre intake slowly to avoid an upset stomach.

Foods high in fibre include:

Food Item	Fibre (g) ¹
1 cup frozen mixed vegetables	8.6
½ cup baked beans	8.2
½ cup stewed apricots	7
½ cup muesli	6.5
1 bran muffin	6
2 Weetbix	4.8
1 cup brown rice	3.7
1 slice wholemeal bread	3.2
1 kumara	2.8
Dried apricots (10 halves)	2.7
1 slice wholegrain bread	2.6
2 slices white high-fibre	2.6
1 cup porridge	2.1
1 apple or banana	2
2 slices white bread	1.6

¹ Nutrition Foundation, 2015

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Simple suggestions to boost your fibre intake

1 Choose wholegrain breads and cereals (high in insoluble fibre)

- Breads – Choose brown bread over white bread, e.g. wholegrain, mixed grain, wholemeal, soy and linseed, rye, pumpernickel
- Cereals – Porridge, Rolled oats, Weet-Bix, All-Bran, Natural untoasted muesli, Bran Flakes

If baking, you could also substitute half of the white flour with wholemeal flour.

2 Eat 2 to 4 servings of fruit (depending on energy needs) and 5 servings of vegetables every day

- A serving is the amount that fits into your cupped hand
- Choose raw fruit and vegetables rather than fruit juice
- Leave the skin on as this contains most of the fibre



3 Eat legumes (high in soluble fibre)

- Try adding legumes (e.g. lentils, chickpeas, split peas, dried peas, and beans) to meat dishes, soups, and casseroles

4 Read food labels to check fibre amounts

High fibre: more than 6 grams (g) per 100g

	Per serve	Per 100g
Energy (kJ)	444	1480
(Cal)	106	353
Protein (g)	3.6	12
Fat (g)	0.4	1.4
Saturated Fat (g)	0.1	0.3
Trans Fat (g)	0.0	0.0
Polyunsaturated Fat (g)	0.3	0.9
Monounsaturated Fat (g)	0.1	0.2
Carbohydrate (g)	20.1	67.0
Sugars (g)	0.8	2.8
Dietary Fibre (g)	3.0	10.1
Sodium (mg)	81	270



5 Consider resistant starch

Most foods which are high in fibre have resistant starch, which can be good for diabetes control. You can increase the amount of resistant starch by changing the way you prepare foods. Examples:

- Cool cooked oats for several hours or overnight before eating
- Cool cooked potato for a few hours before eating and reheat

6 Drink plenty of water

If you are eating more fibre-rich foods, drink more water as fibre absorbs water in the body.



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