

"A Healthier You"

Wellness Rx^{LLC.}
"A Patient-Centered Pharmacy"

FIBER

ABOUT:

- Fiber or "roughage" is the indigestible parts of foods. Fiber is a type of carbohydrate. It passes through the digestive tract without being absorbed.
- Some of fiber's asserted effects include prevention of heart disease, lowering the chances of developing diabetes, warding off colon polyps and colon cancer, decreasing cholesterol, helping to alleviate symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome and the possibility of averting pancreatic cancer.
- Fiber's most desirable effect is keeping people regular. Along with high daily water intake (6-8 glasses (8oz.) daily, it's the natural treatment for constipation.
- Suggested daily intake of fiber for men 50 and younger is 34 grams; for older men, 30 grams; for women 50 and younger, 30 grams; and for older women 21 grams. Exact daily dosage is not critical.

FORMS OF FIBER:

Fiber comes in two forms, soluble (prebiotic) and insoluble:

1. **Soluble fiber** dissolves in water, becomes a gel and is fermented by bacteria in the digestive tract. It slows the absorption of sugar into the blood so that blood sugar doesn't peak too high or too rapidly. It lowers LDL cholesterol (the bad cholesterol that clogs arteries). Nuts, seeds, beans, peas, lentils, oat cereal, apples, pears, apricots, peaches, strawberries and carrots furnish soluble fiber naturally.
2. **Insoluble fiber** draws water into undigested food as it moves through the digestive system to keep it soft, moist and easily eliminated. Whole grains (grains that haven't been refined, that still have their outer coat) bran, corn, nuts, seeds, most fruits, most vegetables, the skin of apples and Brussels sprouts are examples of insoluble fiber. Some foods are both. For example, plums and prunes have a thick skin covering a juicy pulp. The plum's skin is a source of insoluble fiber, whereas the soluble fiber is in the pulp. There is not a great distinction between soluble and insoluble fiber.

SUPPLEMENTS:

Dietary fiber supplements can be used safely to help meet our daily fiber needs. One of the best sources is bran-based cereals such as Fiber One. This whole grain supplement provides **thirteen (13) grams of fiber to your diet per serving**. Fiber Choice (natural vegetable fiber inulin) and Benefiber (natural wheat dextrin) provide about **three (3) grams of fiber to your diet per serving** and come in both tablet and powder form. Vegetable gum fiber supplements and natural juice products that claim to provide up to 10 grams of soluble dietary fiber in every 8oz. serving are relatively new to the market.

Metamucil (100% Natural Psyllium) and methylcellulose-based products are bulk-forming insoluble fiber supplements that's prime goal is to soften stools and shorten transit time through the intestinal tract. These products provide about **three (3) grams of fiber to your diet per serving**. It is important that you take full glasses of water (8 oz. +) with these supplements to avoid the possibility of choking. It is also recommended to take supplements with food to reduce stomach problems and to take prescription and OTC medications at least 2 hours before or 2 hours after taking supplement.

A disadvantage of a diet high in fibers is the potential for significant intestinal gas production and bloating. Constipation can occur if insufficient fluid is consumed with a high-fiber diet.

In helping to alleviate symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome, such as diarrhea and/or constipation and abdominal discomfort, prebiotic soluble fiber products, like those containing inulin or oligosaccharides, may contribute the most relief from inflammatory bowel disease (i.e. Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis), due in part to the short-chain fatty acids produced with subsequent anti-inflammatory actions upon the bowel. Furthermore, fiber supplements may be effective in an overall dietary plan for managing bowel syndrome by modification of food choices (Wikipedia).

Potential Longevity/Long Term Benefits:

A study of 388,000 adults ages 50 to 71 for nine years found that the highest consumers of fiber were 22% less likely to die over this period (Arch Intern Med 171 (12): 1061-8; 2/14/11). In addition to lowering the risk of death from heart disease, adequate consumption of fiber-containing foods, especially grains, also appeared to reduce the incidence of infectious and respiratory illnesses and particularly among males, lowered the risk of cancer-related death.

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