

August Nutrition Focus: Getting Fiber from Whole Foods

Fiber is an indigestible type of carbohydrate found in plants. Foods rich in fiber include whole grains, lentils, beans, vegetables, fruits, nuts, and seeds. Fiber has many health benefits, yet most Americans are not consuming enough. The American Heart Association recommends consuming at least 25-38 grams of fiber per day for optimal health. If you're looking to add more fiber to your diet, it's best to do it slowly, start with smaller portions, and drink plenty of fluids daily. This can help prevent painful bloating and gas as your body adjusts to eating more fiber.

Amazing Health Benefits of Fiber:

- Promotes healthy digestion and bowel movements.
- Can help manage constipation and diarrhea.
- Lowers cholesterol by binding to it and helping your body get rid of the excess.
- Slows down the absorption of glucose into the blood stream preventing blood sugar spikes.
- Regulates appetite by increasing satiety & can help prevent overeating.
- Reduces the risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and some types of cancer.

Tips for Adding More Fiber to Your Diet:

- Choose beans more often. Try adding ¼ - ½ cup beans to salads, soups, and with rice.
- Check the labels when buying bread, crackers, and cereals and choose products made with whole grains. Tip: "Multigrain" does not always mean high fiber. Instead look for products that say "100% Whole Wheat" or provide 3 or more grams fiber per serving.
- Eat 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, sweet potatoes, peas, avocado, asparagus, berries, apples, and pears are all good sources of fiber.
- Try adding 1 teaspoon or more of chia seeds or flax seeds on top of oatmeal and yogurt or add to smoothies.

Fiber-Rich Microwave Oatmeal (Recipe adapted from daisybeet.com)

Ingredients:

- ½ cup Old Fashioned Oats
- 1 cup low-fat Milk or Unsweetened Soymilk
- 1 tsp Chia Seeds
- ½ tsp Cinnamon
- 1 tsp Sweetener of choice such as Honey or Maple Syrup
- ½ cup Raspberries (fresh or frozen)



Instructions:

1. Combine oats, milk of choice, chia seeds, and cinnamon to a microwave safe bowl and stir. Microwave for 1 minute and 45 seconds. Remove from microwave and stir. Let it sit for 1-2 minutes to continue to thicken.
2. Add sweetener and raspberries on top. Enjoy!

Nutrition Facts (estimated): 367 Calories, 15g Protein, 10g Fiber, 53g Carbohydrates, 6g Fat.