

# FIBER FACTSHEET

## What is Fiber?

Fiber is a dietary substance that helps keep food moving efficiently throughout the body and is an important part of a healthy diet. Fiber treats and prevents constipation, increases satiety to help control weight, and decreases blood cholesterol levels. Fiber also optimizes immunity by acting as a prebiotic and keeping the good gut bacteria healthy. Fiber is found in whole grains, beans, fruits, and vegetables. Consuming fiber from a variety of sources is suggested to gain the maximum benefit from your meals.

### Soluble and Insoluble Fiber are Undigested

Instead of being used for energy, they pass through the gastrointestinal tract and are excreted from the body.

**Soluble fiber** forms a gel when mixed with water. It helps reduce overall cholesterol levels and promotes gut health through fermentation and gas production. May also decrease loose stools (diarrhea).

**Food Sources:** oatmeal, oat bran, nuts, legumes, fruits, veggies, and psyllium husk.

**Insoluble fiber** passes through the intestines largely intact. It is considered "roughage" and adds bulk to waste in the digestive system and helps prevent constipation.

**Food Sources:** wheat bran, seeds, nuts, fruit and veggie skins, and leafy veggies.



### Tips to Increase Fiber in Meals and Snacks

- Meet daily fiber needs by eating 2 cups of fruit and 2 1/2 cups of vegetables with the skin left intact, where appropriate.
- Add whole grains, beans, legumes, and vegetables to stews and casseroles.
- Add oats to cookies and bread.
- Add fruit to cereal and salads or eat as a snack with nuts or nut butter.
- Choose cereals and granola with at least 3 grams of fiber per serving. Bran cereals are especially high in fiber, but go easy if you don't usually eat them to avoid stomach distress.
- Increase fiber intake during long flights and take higher fiber options with you when you travel to destinations with less access to fruits, veggies, and whole grains.

### Low Residue and Low Fiber Diets

- If not used to eating fiber-rich foods before competition, limit the amount of fiber consumed 2-3 days before event.
- Low fiber diets can be used as an acute weight loss strategy (2-3 days before weigh-ins for competition) to decrease the weight of bowel contents.

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## How much Fiber?

### The Daily Recommended Intake (DRI):

Females (18-50 years old) = 25 g/d

Males (18-50 years old) = 38 g/d

### Signs of Inadequate Fiber Intake

- Constipation or less than 3 bowel movements per week
- Frequent hunger or poor satiety
- Blood sugar fluctuation

### Signs of Excessive Fiber Intake

- Abdominal issues such as bloating, gas, and cramping
- Poor mineral absorption (i.e. iron, zinc, magnesium, calcium)
- Constipation and diarrhea

### Fiber Rich Meals

*Breakfast:* Breakfast tacos with 1/3 cup black beans, 1/2 sweet potato, 1/2 cup spinach, and 3 eggs (8g)

*Snack:* 1 cup raspberries and Greek yogurt (8g)

*Lunch:* Turkey with 1/4 avocado sandwich on whole grain bread, side salad and apple (16g)

*Snack:* Mango and pineapple smoothie (4g)

*Dinner:* Grilled salmon and 1 cup roasted veggies with 1 cup brown rice (8g)

### Athlete Recommendations:

## Increasing Fiber Intake

### Ease into eating more fiber slowly.

If you are not meeting the recommended intake, add no more than 5 grams of fiber every 3 days for 6-8 weeks to avoid gastrointestinal issues like gas and bloating. **Drink plenty of water** to help move high-fiber foods through the digestive system as intake increases.

Soluble fiber often causes gas, while insoluble fiber helps food move out more quickly, allowing for less gas potential. If experiencing bloating, switch out soluble fiber for insoluble fiber.

Food Sources of Soluble Fiber	Total Fiber (g)
Navy Beans - 1 cup.....	19
Lentils - 1 cup.....	16
Black Beans - 1 cup.....	15
Lima Beans - 1 cup.....	14
Kidney or Garbanzo Beans - 1 cup.....	12
Oat Bran, raw - 1 ounce.....	12
Blackberries - 1 cup.....	8
Brussel Sprouts, cooked - 1 cup.....	6
Prunes, dried - 1/2 cup.....	6
Pear - 1 medium.....	6
Green Peas - 1 cup.....	5
Old Fashioned Oats - 1/2 cup.....	4

  

Food Sources of Insoluble Fiber	Total Fiber (g)
Wheat Bran, raw - 1 ounce.....	12
All-Bran Cereal - 1 cup.....	10
Acorn Squash, cooked - 1 cup.....	9
Flaxseed - 1 ounce.....	8
Raspberries - 1 cup.....	8
Quinoa, cooked - 1 cup.....	5
Sweet Potato, 1 medium.....	4
Spinach, cooked - 1 cup.....	4
Almonds - 1 ounce.....	4
Popcorn, air popped - 3 cups.....	4