

# FIBER TIPS FOR HEART HEALTH

Fiber is a type of carbohydrate that's an essential part of plant-based foods that your body doesn't digest. There are two types of fiber: **soluble** (also known as viscous) and **insoluble fiber**. Soluble fiber, which isn't absorbed in the intestines, binds to cholesterol and helps remove it from the body.

## Benefits of Fiber

Soluble fiber plays a key role in lowering LDL (low-density lipoprotein), also known as the "bad" cholesterol. Insoluble fiber helps promote regular bowel movements and prevents constipation.

## The recommended daily intake of fiber:

- Women (ages 50 and younger) 25 grams per day.
- Women (ages 51 and older) 21 grams per day.
- Men (ages 50 and younger) 38 grams per day.
- Men (ages 51 and older) 30 grams per day.

Consuming 5 to 10 grams of soluble fiber each day may reduce your LDL cholesterol by 5 to 11 points. Utilize the nutrition facts panels on foods as a tool to identify fiber content.

An important note is to gradually increase your fiber intake. Aim to add 5 grams of fiber to your daily intake each week. This gives your digestive system time to adjust. Also drink plenty of water as fiber absorbs water. This will help prevent any digestive discomfort. Also spreading fiber intake throughout the day allows the body to digest the fiber more easily. Additionally, adding physical activity such as walking after meals can aid in healthy digestion.

# HIGH FIBER FOODS TO INCORPORATE IN YOUR DIET

1. **Vegetables:** Broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, green beans, onions, acorn squash, lima beans, parsnips, turnips, carrots, okra, and eggplant.
2. **Fruits:** Berries, avocados, pears, oranges, apples, bananas, kiwis
  - a. Opt for whole fruits & vegetables instead of 100% fruit juices.  
Removing the peels on produce lowers their fiber content.
3. **Whole grains:** Oats, quinoa, whole wheat, barley, brown rice, and bulgur.
4. **Plant Focused Proteins:** Tofu, tempeh, lentils, beans (black beans, navy beans, kidney beans, lima beans, pinto beans), edamame, and chickpeas.
5. **Seeds and Nuts:** Flax seeds, chia seeds, hemp seeds, pumpkin seeds, almonds, hazelnuts, and pistachios.

## Additional tips to boost fiber intake

- **Start your day with a fiber rich breakfast**– Whole-grain cereal, oatmeal with nuts and seeds, fruit smoothie, or whole-grain toast with avocado.
- **Incorporate vegetables into every meal**– Add veggies into a stir fry, add into soups/chilies, purée veggies to add to a sauce for pasta dishes, and add additional veggies to sandwiches.
- **Add fiber rich snacks**– Hummus or bean dip with snap peas or carrots, popcorn, nut trail mix, chia seed pudding, and whole fruits.