the center
For Naturopathic Medicine & Functional Nutrition

What is Fiber?



Just as bones make up the skeletons of animals, fiber is the skeleton of plants. Fiber is only found in plants which is why consuming a plant-rich diet is so important. Fiber is a type of carbohydrate that your body cannot digest and is important for digestive health and weight maintenance as well as lowering risk of diabetes, heart disease, and certain types of cancer.

TYPES OF FIBER



Soluble

Soluble fiber dissolves in water and acts like a sponge. When eaten it creates a sticky bolus [a small gel-like mass] that helps lower blood glucose and cholesterol levels. It also works with your liver to escort excess hormones, like estrogen and testosterone, from the body.

Sources:

oats, oat bran, beans, lentils, chia seed, flax meal, nuts and seeds, barley, citrus fruits, apples, strawberries, blueberries, pears, and sweet potatoes.

Insoluble

Insoluble fiber does not dissolve in water and acts like a broom, facilitating movement of food through the digestive tract. It also contributes to bulking up stool which promotes regularity and reduces constipation.

Sources:

whole grains, vegetables [like zucchini, cauliflower, broccoli, and carrots], avocado, leafy greens.



The amount of dietary fiber varies for everyone, depending on age and gender, but generally it is recommended to aim for more than 25g – 30g daily. Eating a daily diet rich in plants with plenty of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, seeds, nuts, and beans can ensure you get adequate amounts.

