

FIBER: A PREVENTION TO COLORECTAL CANCER

Plant foods rich in dietary fiber – vegetables, fruits, whole grains and beans – help protect us against cancer, specifically colorectal cancer, as well as other chronic diseases. Along with vitamins and minerals, plant foods contain hundreds of naturally occurring plant chemicals called phytochemicals, which help protect the body's cells from becoming damaged (a pre-condition for cancer) and help to repair them.

HEALTH NOTES



For more information

Visit kp.org/health

- Read about colorectal cancer in the Health Encyclopedia.

Call Kaiser Permanente Medical Advice

- Talk to your medical advice nurse 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling (703) 359-7878 or 1-800-777-7904 or TTY (703) 359-7616 or 1-800-700-4901.

Dietary fiber slows the digestion of food, so you feel full longer. Here are some benefits to fiber:

- protects the lining of the colon and helps prevent cancerous cells,
- help lower blood sugar levels,
- interfere with fat and cholesterol absorption, lowering blood cholesterol and protecting your heart, and
- helps prevent constipation.

Both soluble and insoluble fiber are important to your health. They help in digestion, promotes regularity, and helps maintain a healthy weight.

Soluble fiber. Examples are:

- beans (kidney, navy, pinto, soy);
- split peas (green or yellow), lentils;
- oats and barley;
- figs, apples, oranges, sweet potatoes.

Insoluble fiber. Examples are:

- wheat bran,
- whole grain breads and cereals,
- pears, apples, green beans, peas, and
- chick peas, lentils, pinto beans.

How much fiber is enough?

- Aim for 21–38 grams of dietary fiber each day including 7-13 grams of soluble fiber.
- Pick at least 5 vegetable and fruit servings, and at least three small servings of whole grains (for example ½ cup of oatmeal, ½ cup of brown rice, or 1 slice of whole-wheat bread) each day.

Increase fiber slowly

Eating large amounts of fiber (60 or more grams) may give you a stomach ache and excess gas. Slowly increase the amount of fiber-rich foods you eat. Be sure to drink at least eight 8-ounce glasses of water, or other sugar free drinks daily. If you are having trouble digesting high-fiber foods, speak with a member of your health care team.

The choices you make about food, physical activity and weight management can reduce your chances of developing cancer.

- Choose mostly plant foods, limit red meat and avoid processed meat.
- Be physically active every day in any way for 30 minutes or more.
- Aim to be a healthy weight throughout life.

Sources of Dietary Fiber and Soluble Fiber

Food Item	Serving Size	Dietary Fiber/gms	Water Soluble Fiber/gms
Beans			
Navy Beans	½ cup	6.7	4.0
Small White Beans	½ cup	9.3	2.7
Refried Beans	½ cup	6.7	2.5
Pinto Beans	½ cup	5.5	2.1
Garbanzo Beans	½ cup	6.2	1.9
Kidney Beans	½ cup	5.5	1.3
Lentils	½ cup	7.8	1.3
Breads			
Whole Wheat Bagel	1–4.5"	10.3	3.7
Whole Wheat Pita	1	3.3	1.5
Rye Bread	1 slice	1.9	0.8
Wholewheat Bread	1 slice	1.9	0.4
Cereals/Grains			
All-Bran Buds	⅓ cup	13.0	3.0
Total Wheat	1 cup	3.5	2.4
Oatmeal, cooked	1 cup	4.0	2.3
Spaghetti, cooked	1 cup	2.4	1.7
Life Cereal	1 cup	2.8	1.6
Oat Bran	¼ cup	3.6	1.5
Grape Nuts	¼ cup	2.7	1.5
Barley, cooked	½ cup	6.8	1.4
Bran Flakes	1 cup	6.2	1.3
Cheerios	1 cup	3.0	1.0
Brown Rice	1 cup	3.5	0.4
Crackers			
Rye Wafers	4	10.1	2.3
Fruits			
Dried Figs	4	9.1	2.6
Orange	1	3.0	1.8
Blackberries	1 cup	7.6	1.7
Mango	½	1.9	1.1
Pear	1 medium	5.2	1.1
Dried Prunes	4	2.4	1.0
Kiwi	1 medium	2.6	0.9
Grapefruit Sections	½ cup	1.3	0.9
Apple	1 medium	3.3	0.3
Vegetables			
Sweet Potato	1 small	3.1	1.3
Green Peas	½ cup	4.4	1.2
Fordhook Lima Beans	½ cup	4.9	1.2
Brussels Sprouts	½ cup	3.2	1.1
Carrots, cooked	½ cup	2.3	1.0
Broccoli	½ cup	2.6	0.3

Source: Genesis R&D Product Development and Labeling Software; food labels for All-Bran and Cheerios. Facts about fiber American Institute for Cancer Research; c 2001 AICR. Latest revision November 2009.

The information presented here is not intended to diagnose health problems or to take the place of professional medical care. If you have persistent medical problems, or if you have further questions, please consult your doctor or member of your health care team. Kaiser Permanente does not endorse any brand names. Similar products may be used.

REGIONAL HEALTH EDUCATION, HEALTH PROMOTION AND WOMEN'S HEALTH

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