



Diet and Bowel Management

Fibre and Fluid

It is essential to have a good fibre and fluid intake to keep your bowels moving effectively. Fibre works to control your bowels by holding fluid that is in the gut. This adds “bulk” to your stool and helps with both dry/hard stools (constipation) and loose/runny stools. Fibre also helps to move your stool along in the bowels, and assist with evacuation. The two types of fibre, soluble and insoluble, are described below. If your fibre levels are not high enough, you should increase their amounts gradually over two weeks. In order for the increased fibre to be effective, you need to have an adequate fluid intake.



Drink at least 2.5 litres (10 eight ounce glasses) of fluid each day
Have at least 25-30 grams of fibre in your diet each day



Insoluble Fibre can not be digested by the human body. Because of this, it is passed through the digestive system and assists with evacuation.

Soluble Fibre is a gentler, “bulking” type of fibre which your body can partially digest. This is the fibre that has been linked to lowering cholesterol.

Tips for Constipation

- Include the extra fibre during all meals throughout the day, but be sure you have a concentrated source of fibre at breakfast time
- Concentrate on foods high in **insoluble fibre**.
- Example: flax seed, wheat bran, fruits and vegetables **with the peel**, leafy green vegetables, whole grain breads and pastas
- Avoid: high fat foods, white rice, soda crackers, potato chips
- Tip: consider adding wheat bran on salads, desserts or including it in recipes (e.g. soup, chili, meatloaf)

Tips for Loose Stool

- Include the extra fibre at all meals throughout the day, but be sure you have at least 10 grams daily at breakfast time
- Concentrate on foods that are high in **soluble fibre**.
- Examples: squash, oatmeal and oat products, psyllium (in some cereals & Metamucil), white rice, soda crackers, bananas, applesauce, carrots and apples **without the peel**.
- Avoid foods that irritate your digestive tract. These vary between individuals but may include: pears, caffeine, alcohol, chocolate, strong spices, and black pepper.
- Avoid lots of sugar, candy, syrup, and sugar free candy, as these products will cause more fluid to accumulate in the gut.

Contact your Dietitian for more information.

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Note that the amount of fibre in foods does not change with cooking, so foods can be raw or cooked.

Food	Serving Size	Fibre (grams)
Vegetables and Fruit		
Green peas, cooked	125 mL (1/2 cup)	3.7 – 5.6
Potato, with skin, cooked	1 medium	2.8 – 4.3
Edamame/baby soybeans, cooked	125 mL (1/2 cup)	4.3
Spinach	125 mL (1/2 cup)	2.3 – 3.7
Avocado	½ fruit	6.7
Pear, with skin	1 medium	5.0
Raspberries or blackberries	125 mL (1/2 cup)	4.0 – 4.2
Orange	1 fruit	3.6
Cauliflower, cooked	125 mL (1/2 cup)	1.8 – 2.6
Broccoli, fresh or frozen, cooked	125 mL (1/2 cup)	2.0 – 2.3
Carrot, cooked	125 mL (1/2 cup)	2.2
Corn, fresh or frozen, cooked	125 mL (1/2 cup)	1.7 – 2.2
Grain Products		
Bran (100% Bran, All Bran, All Bran Buds)	30g	10.0 – 12.0
Bran (corn, wheat, rice), raw	¼ cup	4.2 – 15.8
Muffin, oat bran	1 small	3.0
Bread (whole wheat, rye)	1 slice (35 g)	2.0 – 2.4
Pasta (white, whole wheat), cooked	125 mL (1/2 cup)	1.3 – 2.4
Rice (brown, wild), cooked	125 mL (1/2 cup)	1.5 – 2.0
Meats and Alternatives		
Beans (small white, yellow, black, pinto, kidney, navy), cooked	175 mL (3/4 cup)	8.6 – 13.8
Lentils, cooked	175 mL (3/4 cup)	6.2
Chickpeas/garbanzo beans, cooked	175 mL (3/4 cup)	5.5
Coconut, dried, shredded	125 mL (1/2 cup)	7.8
Almonds, whole	60 mL (1/4 cup)	3.8 – 4.1

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