

Planning Meals: Fibre Facts

Fibre is found in foods such as vegetables, fruit, whole grain breads and cereals, nuts, seeds and legumes (dried peas, beans, soy and lentils). A diet high in fibre, along with exercise and healthy eating, can help you maintain normal bowel habits. Fibre helps prevent constipation by adding bulk and absorbing water, thus softening the stool. High fibre diets may also help prevent and treat a variety of diseases and conditions, such as heart disease, colon cancer and diabetes. A healthy diet for seniors should include 21-30 grams of fibre per day.

Use Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide to help you choose foods that are higher in fibre. Small changes can add up to a big difference in your fibre intake.

Best sources of fibre:

Vegetables and Fruit

- Fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruits and vegetables, especially those with edible seeds or skins, such as potatoes with skin, broccoli, corn, peas, raspberries, strawberries, blueberries, pears, apples, prunes, dates, figs, dried apricots or raisins.

Grain products

- Whole grain breads, such as 100 per cent whole wheat bread.
- Whole grain cereals, such as oatmeal or shredded wheat.
- High fibre cereals such as any cereal containing wheat bran, wheat germ, oat bran or psyllium.
- Whole grain and higher fibre crackers, muffins and cookies, such as whole wheat or rye crackers, bran muffins, oatmeal cookies, date squares.
- Whole grains such as brown or wild rice, barley, bulgur, wheat germ, whole grain wheat, buckwheat or millet.
- Whole grain pasta, such as spaghetti or macaroni.



Milk and Alternatives

- While dairy products are not a natural source of fibre, some yogurts may contain added fibre. Read the label to check out the amount of fibre.

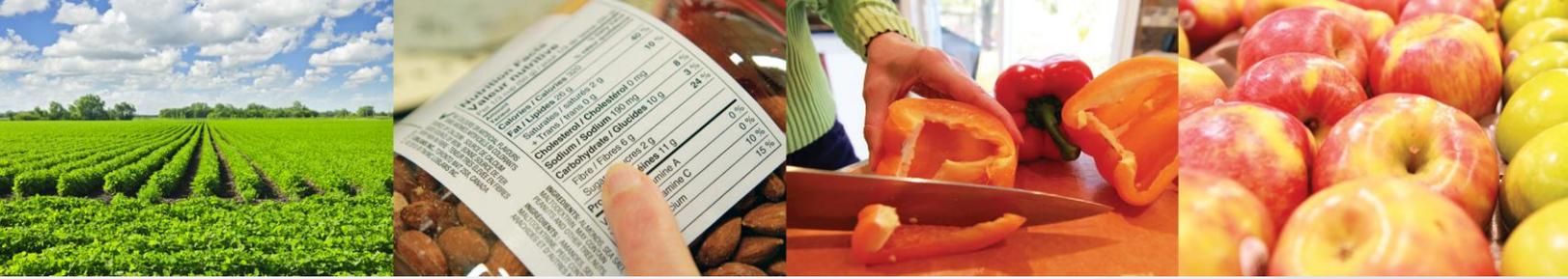
Meat and Alternatives

- Cooked dried peas, beans and lentils, such as kidney beans, soybeans, black beans, chick peas and yellow or split peas.
- Nuts and seeds, such as whole almonds, sunflower seeds and ground flax.

High fibre menu ideas

Breakfast

- High fibre cereals such as bran cereals or shredded wheat. Or add a scoop of high fibre cereal mixed with one of your favourites.
- Cooked oatmeal sprinkled with ground flax and wheat germ.
- Cereal topped with raisins, sunflower seeds or a handful of frozen or fresh blueberries.
- Whole wheat toast with peanut butter and sliced banana.
- Whole fruit instead of juice.
- Prunes – plain or stewed.
- Pancakes made with whole wheat flour and added ground flax seed.

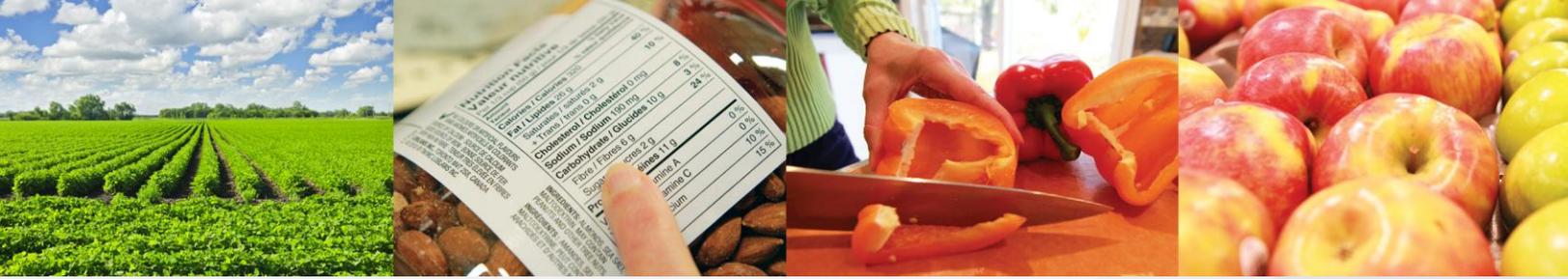


Lunch

- Soups made with dried peas, beans, lentils or barley, such as split pea or minestrone.
- Sandwiches made with higher fibre bread such as whole wheat, multigrain or dark rye bread.
- Green salad with vegetables and fruit such as shredded carrot, snow peas, strawberries and pear slices. Add chickpeas or sprinkle with sunflower seeds or almonds.
- Marinated bean, spinach or carrot and raisin salad.
- Fruit salad with a bran muffin made with whole wheat flour and added raisins, figs or dates.

Supper

- Baked beans or chili with lots of kidney beans.
- Casseroles with added beans, lentils, barley and vegetables and a handful of raw bran.
- Baked potato in skin topped with steamed broccoli and black beans. Sprinkle with a little cheese.
- Meat loaf or meatballs made with added raw bran.



Tips for Staying Regular

- Eat a higher fibre diet. To minimize stomach bloating and gas, increase your fibre gradually.
- Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day to help the fibre work. Sip on fluids such as water, juice, milk, soup, herbal teas, decaffeinated coffee or tea.
- Exercise regularly. Even a short, daily walk is a good idea.
- Avoid laxatives unless your doctor has prescribed them.

You can get a copy of the guide by calling 1 800 622-6232 or by visiting www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide.



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