

# Fiber: The Facts



MEGAN HOUSEMAN

# What is fiber?



- **Fiber is the non-digestible portion of plant-based foods**
- **2 main types**
  - **Soluble fiber- can be dissolved in water**
    - ✦ **Sources: oats, legumes (beans, peas, and soybeans), apples, bananas, berries, barely, some vegetables, and psyllium**
  - **Insoluble fiber- cannot be dissolved in water; acts as a bulking agent**
    - ✦ **Sources: whole wheat foods, bran, nuts, seeds, and the skin of some fruits and vegetables**

# Benefits of Fiber



- **Weight control**
  - Fiber helps you feel fuller for a longer period of time
- **Diabetes**
  - Helps to slow the breakdown of food, so it keeps blood sugar under control (also helps prevent diabetes!)
- **Heart Disease**
  - Soluble fiber reduces the absorption of cholesterol in the intestines (eat your oatmeal!)
- **Constipation**
  - Fiber adds bulk so it can help to prevent and treat constipation; it also may help prevent colon cancer

# How much do I need?



- Depends on age and gender
- Most people only get half the fiber they need per day!

Age	Gender	Grams per Day
Up to 50 years	Men	38
Up to 50 years	Women	25
Over 50 years	Men	30
Over 50 years	Women	21

# How do I get fiber?



- **Eat whole grains**
  - Whole grain not only provide fiber they have extra vitamins and minerals
  - Aim for about 3 servings per day
  - Examples: whole wheat bread, brown rice, oats
- **Fruits and Vegetables**
  - Raw and cooked vegetables have the most fiber
  - Aim for 2 cups of fruits and 2 ½ cups of veggies
- **Beans and peas**
  - Most fiber out of any vegetable
  - ½ cup per day or 3 cups per week
- **Nuts and seeds**
  - Great way to add fiber to meals (protein too!)
  - Almonds and walnuts also have “healthy fats”
  - Have a handful for a snack!

<b>Food</b>	<b>Serving Size</b>	<b>Grams of Fiber</b>
Kidney Beans or Chickpeas	1/2 cup cooked	6-9
Raisin Bran Cereal	1 cup	6-9
Baked Beans	1/2 cup	5
Almonds	1/4 cup	4
Apple	1 medium	4
Berries	1/2 cup	4
Popcorn	3 cups popped	4
Banana	1 medium	3
Broccoli	1/2 cup cooked	3
Instant Oatmeal	1/2 cup	3
Raisins	1/4 cup	3
Carrot	1 medium raw	2
Green Beans	1/2 cup cooked	2
Peanut Butter	2 tablespoons	2
Walnuts	1/2 cup	2
Whole Wheat Bread	1 slice	2

# Label Reading

- Always check serving size
- Dietary fiber is found under the “Total Carbohydrate” heading

## Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 140 grams (140g)  
Servings Per Container 1

### Amount Per Serving

Calories 140      Calories from Fat 70

% Daily Value\*

**Total Fat** 7g      **11%**

Saturated Fat 2.5g      **13%**

Trans Fat 0g

**Cholesterol** 25mg      **8%**

**Sodium** 300mg      **13%**

**Total Carbohydrate** 9g      **3%**

Dietary Fiber 2g      **8%**

Sugars 3g

**Protein** 8g

Vitamin A 10%      •      Vitamin C 20%

Calcium 4%      •      Iron 10%

# Tips for adding fiber



- **START SLOWLY!**
  - If you add fiber too fast it can cause gas and bloating
  - Start slow and work your way up to you fiber goal
- **Drink water**
  - Since fiber does absorb water its important to make sure you drink more water when increasing your fiber to keep things moving
- **Spread out your fiber**
  - Have some fiber at every meal throughout the day
  - Get you fiber from several different sources



# Fiber Supplements

- Come in a variety of forms
  - Powders, tablets, wafers, etc
- Great as a supplement for people with high cholesterol or constant constipation
- Best to get fiber from food sources
- Talk to your doctor to see if a fiber supplement is right for you



# Sample Menu

- **Breakfast**

- 1 cup Raisin Bran (7 grams)
- ½ cup skim milk
- 1 medium banana (3 grams)

- **Lunch**

- Turkey Sandwich
  - ✦ 2 slices Whole Wheat Bread (4 grams)
- 1 medium apple (4 grams)

- **Dinner**

- 3oz meatloaf
- 1 medium baked potato (4 grams)
- ½ cup cooked broccoli (3 grams)
- 1 small whole wheat dinner roll (2 grams)

- **Snack**

- 3 cups popcorn (4 grams)

- **10 grams**

- **8 grams**

- **9 grams**

- **4 grams**

- **Total: 31 grams of fiber**

# Summary



- **Fiber is from the break down of plant-based foods**
- **It helps prevent and control disease**
- **It is found in a variety of foods**
- **We need to add fiber slowly to our diets**
- **We need to drink plenty of water with fiber**



**Thank you!**



**QUESTIONS?**