

Fiber

It is recommended that women consume 25 g per day of fiber. Studies have shown that 90% of the US population consumes less than the recommended amount of fiber, eating only about 15 g of fiber on average per day. There are two main types of fiber; insoluble and soluble.

INSOLUBLE FIBER:

Insoluble fiber helps alleviate constipation by adding bulk and drawing water into the stool. Insoluble fiber can make loose stools worse.

FOODS HIGH IN INSOLUBLE FIBER:

- Wheat bran, 11.3 grams of insoluble fiber per 1/2 cup
- All Bran cereal, 7.2 g per 1/3 cup
- Most beans (1/2 cup)
- Lentils, 4.6 g per 1/2 cup
- Shredded Wheat cereal, 4.5 g per cup
- Flax seeds, 2.2 g per 1 tbsp

SOLUBLE FIBER:

Soluble fiber can prolong stomach emptying, to help promote satiety. Soluble fiber has also been shown to decrease total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol. Soluble fiber can soften hard stool in constipation and can improve the consistency of loose stools, making for a “cleaner” bowel movement.

FOODS HIGH IN SOLUBLE FIBER:

- Purple passion fruit, 6.5 g of soluble fiber per 1/2 cup
- Psyllium husk, 3.5 g per 1 Tbsp
- Oat/Oat bran, 2.2 g per 3/4 cup
- Some Beans (1/2 cup)
- Tofu, 2.8 g per 3/4 cup
- Edamame, 1.5 g per 1/2 cup
- Avocado, 2.1 g
- Brussels sprouts, 2 g

- Sweet potato, 1.8 g
- Asparagus, 1.7 g
- Orange, 1.8 g, medium size
- Fruit with skin, like pear, apricots, and nectarine, ~ 1.2 g

Many high fiber foods overlap and contain both soluble and insoluble fiber.

SOLUBLE FIBER SUPPLEMENTS:

- Citrucel (brand) Methylcellulose (active ingredient): Least likely to cause gas and bloating.
- Metamucil (brand) Psyllium (active ingredient): soluble, may cause gas or bloating compared to Citrucel.
- Benefiber (brand) Wheat Dextrin (active ingredient): can dissolve in hot or cold water and therefore be used in cooking, and is considered gluten free.
- Acacia fiber (active ingredient): soluble and may be less likely to cause gas or bloating. Acacia fiber is also considered a prebiotic, meaning that it will help promote the growth of good intestinal flora.

OTHER TIPS FOR HAVING A “CLEAN” BOWEL MOVEMENT:

- When starting with a new fiber supplement start at half of the recommended dose. Increase to the full dose over a few days to a week depending on how well you tolerate it.
- Decrease refined carbohydrates in your diet such as white breads and sugars.
- Try to consume more complex carbohydrates such as whole grains and/sweet potatoes.
- Decrease fat consumption.
- Increase dietary protein.
- Squatty Potty: stool that elevates feet to change posture while having bowel movement, shown to decrease the amount of time of evacuation.

Sources: Nutrition Today, March 2015. Evidence-Based Approach to Fiber Supplements and Clinically Meaningful Health Benefits, Part 2 And <http://www.healthcastle.com/fiber-solubleinsoluble.shtml>)

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