

# WHY IS FIBER IMPORTANT?

## WHAT IS FIBER?

Fiber is a type of carbohydrate that the body doesn't digest (break down). Dietary fiber is found in plant foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and beans.

Fiber can be soluble or insoluble:

- **Soluble fiber** dissolves in water. It helps lower cholesterol and improve blood sugar control.
- **Insoluble fiber** does not dissolve in water. It helps with constipation.

Both kinds of fiber are important parts of a healthy diet.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF FIBER?

A diet high in fiber:

- helps prevent or relieve constipation
- increases feelings of fullness, which may help with weight control
- lowers cholesterol
- helps prevent heart disease and diabetes
- may lower the chances of getting some types of cancer



## HOW MUCH FIBER DO KIDS NEED?

One way to estimate how much fiber your child needs is to take your child's age and add 5 or 10 to it.

For example:

- A 5-year-old should get about 10–15 grams (g) of fiber every day.
- A 10-year old should get 15–20 grams (g) of fiber a day.
- A 15-year-old should get 20–25 grams (g) of fiber a day.

## WHAT ARE GOOD SOURCES OF FIBER?

Foods that are naturally high in fiber, include:

- whole grains, such as 100% whole-wheat bread, brown rice, and oatmeal
- cooked dried beans, such as black beans, lentils, and split peas
- fruit and vegetables
- nuts and seeds

## HOW CAN I ADD FIBER TO MEALS?

- Top yogurt, cereal, or oatmeal with fruit and nuts.
- Put veggies, like lettuce, tomato, or avocado on sandwiches.
- Add beans to soups and salads.
- Add bran to baked goods.
- Offer air-popped popcorn, whole-grain crackers, fruit, or vegetables as healthy snack options.



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