

Understanding Health Benefits of Dietary Fibre with Meal Plan



What is dietary fibre?

Dietary fibre is that part of plant foods that cannot be digested.

There are two types of fibre:

Soluble fibre	Insoluble fibre
<u>Health benefits:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowers blood cholesterol levels • Improves blood glucose levels 	<u>Health benefits:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves or maintain healthy bowel function (Prevents constipation)
<u>Sources of food:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oats • Barley • Fruits & vegetables • Legumes (e.g. dried beans & lentils) • Psyllium husks 	<u>Sources of food:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wheat bran • Fruits & vegetables • Wholegrain breads and cereals • Nuts and seeds

Dietary fibre (soluble and insoluble) can also help in controlling weight as it is more filling (prevents you from overeating) and helps keep you full for longer.

How much fibre do you need?

The Health Promotion Board recommends a daily fibre intake of 20g for women and 26g for men.

Tips to increase your fibre intake:

Choose these ✓	Instead of these ✗
Wholegrain or wholemeal bread	White bread
Oats, wheat bran	Plain cereals such as cornflakes
Vegetables and fruits (with their skins where possible)	Peeling edible skins off the fruits
Brown rice	White rice
Whole fruits	Fruit juice
Fruit-based desserts	Sweet confectioneries

Points to note:

- Increase your fibre intake gradually to let your body get used to having more fibre.
- Remember to drink enough fluids. Having enough fluid will help make your stools soft and prevent constipation.
- Aim for six to eight glasses of fluid daily. Choose plain water where possible.

What else can you do to increase fibre?

- Add psyllium husks or chia seeds to cereals and soups.
- Add legumes to salad, stew and rice dishes.
- Add more vegetables to noodles, pastas or sandwiches.



Fibre Content of Foods

Foods	Serve Size	Fibre (g)
Wholemeal bread	1 slice (28g)	1.8
Oats, cooked	1 cup (260g)	4.4
Brown rice, cooked	1 bowl *	3.5
Brown rice beehoon, cooked	1 bowl *	3.0
Baked beans, canned	¾ cup (195g)	8.0
Apple	1 small (130g)	2.9
Long beans, cooked	¾ mug ** (100g)	2.7
Spinach, cooked	¾ mug ** (100g)	2.4
Cherry tomatoes, raw	100g	1.7
Almonds	1 handful (40g)	4.7
Chia seeds	1 tablespoon	5.6
Psyllium husks	1 tablespoon	5.0

A sample meal plan with 30g fibre intake

Meals		Fibre (g)
Breakfast	Oats (4 tablespoons)	3.5
	+ psyllium husk (2 teaspoons)	3.3
	+ Coffee/ low fat milk/ sugar 1 teaspoon	
Morning Tea	1 pear	4.3
Lunch	Yong Tau Foo noodle soup (with 3-4 vegetable-based items and 2-3 non deep-fried protein items such as taukwa/egg)	9.7
Afternoon Tea	1 orange	3.1
Dinner	Brown rice (1 bowl*)	3.5
	+ Stir-fried vegetables (¾mug**)	4.4
	+ chicken without skin (1 palm size, about 90g)	
Total		31.8

Note:

* bowl = 1 rice bowl, ** mug = 250ml

References:

- 1) Health Promotion Board, www.hpb.gov.sg, accessed: 20/12/2024
- 2) Nutrition Society of Malaysia, <http://nutriweb.org.my/>, accessed: 20/12/2024
- 3) United States Department of Agriculture, <https://www.usda.gov/>, accessed: 20/12/2024
- 4) Australian Food, Supplement and Nutrient Database, <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/>, accessed: 20/12/2024