



Family Health Centers Nutrition Program

FOODS WITH FIBER

Fiber is a very essential part of a healthy diet. It is the part of plants that our bodies can not completely digest. There are two main types of fiber, each with important functions.

Soluble fiber helps to lower cholesterol levels, delay glucose absorption and prevent diarrhea. Insoluble fiber gives bulk to stools and helps them move more quickly through our system, thus helping to decrease the risk of constipation, hemorrhoids, diverticulosis, irritable bowel syndrome and colon cancer. Because many fiber foods are low in fat and make your stomach feel fuller, they help you to eat less fat and control your weight better.

Good sources of foods high in fiber include whole grain breads and cereals (eg- wheat bran and oat bran), dried peas and beans, fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds. Meat and dairy products do not contain fiber.

We should be eating about 25-30 grams of fiber a day. However, when adding fiber to your daily diet, do so gradually to alleviate gas and cramping. Also, *increase your water intake* to at least 2 quarts a day to avoid constipation.

Tips for Adding More Fiber to Your Diet

*Choose wheat bran cereals, multi-wholegrain cereals and oatmeal for breakfast. Cereals should have at least 5 grams of fiber per serving.

Add fresh fruit to your cereals.

*Make sandwiches from whole wheat or whole grain bread. Buy whole wheat bagels or multi-wholegrain rolls. Breads should have at least 3 grams of fiber per serving. Add raw greens (eg- leaf lettuce or spinach), onions, tomatoes and other raw vegetables to sandwiches.

*Eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables every day. Leave the peeling on. (Wash it well first.) Fiber is in the whole fruit; it is not in fruit or vegetable juices. The pulp in fruit juice does not provide fiber.

*Have dried peas and beans at least three times a week. Add kidney beans to chili, lentils or navy beans to soups or casseroles, put garbanzo beans (chick peas) in salads, and pinto or black beans in burritos. Serve a creole dish of red beans and brown or wild rice.

*Raw nuts and seeds can be added to cereals, stir-fry dishes or eaten as a snack. (Eat a small handful only as nuts and seeds are high in fat.)

*Plain or lite popcorn is a great low calorie, high fiber snack.

If you would like personal instruction on how to incorporate nutritional guidelines into your life and improve your health, schedule an appointment with:

Karen Youket, Dietitian / Nutritionist
by calling The Family Health Centers at

828-258-8681