

Fiber: An unsung hero, our gut bacteria loves!

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Dietary Fiber is actually a complex carbohydrate and can be thought of as a macronutrient along with carbohydrates, protein, fat and water. The only big difference is, it is not absorbed by the body. Typically, our body converts 100% of the carbs from the foods we eat to glucose before digestion. The only exception is fiber, which the body does not absorb.

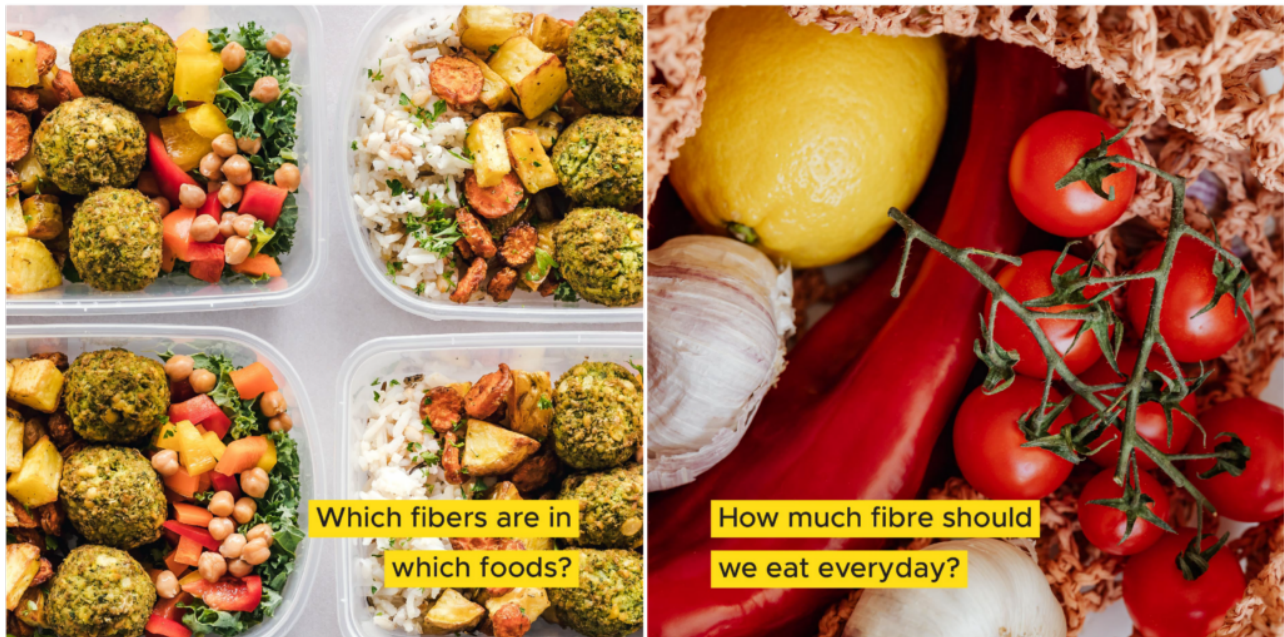
Having adequate dietary fiber contributes to build a healthy gut microbial population by deterring the growth of nasty gut bacterial pathogens. The short chain fatty acid produced by these good gut microbes in turn has anti-inflammatory and anti-carcinogenic properties.

There are 2 main kinds of fiber; Soluble and Insoluble Fiber.

Soluble fiber dissolves in water to form a gel that helps digestion and regulate the blood sugar level. In addition, some types of soluble fibers like β -glucan (found in oats and barley) have been strongly linked to lowering cholesterol – especially LDL – and blood pressure.

Insoluble fiber attracts water and helps the transit of bulk through the lower gut, promoting the fecal excretion of carcinogens like nitrosamines. Reducing the transit time also reduces exposure of gut mucosa to these carcinogens, reducing risk of colorectal cancer.

Consumption of food rich in dietary fiber is absolutely necessary for wellness. Unfortunately, this is often lacking in most diets. Legumes, nuts, wholegrains, fruits and vegetables as well as non-starchy vegetables are great sources of fiber. Might seem obvious, but it may be important to clarify that meats and dairy products don't contain any fiber.



Which fibers are in which foods?

Soluble fibers are widely available in beans, oats, citrus, apples, psyllium, nuts. Insoluble fibers are found in whole grains, legumes, carrots, cucumber, tomatoes and the peels and skin of fruits and vegetables. Before you get hung up on the classification, know also that most fiber-containing foods contain portions of both soluble and insoluble fibers.

It's more important to be consume sufficient amounts of fiber each day than worrying which type it is.

How much fibre is enough?

The recommended daily fibre intake for healthy adults is 25g. However, it's not immediately clear what that looks like from the foods we consume. To get a third of your daily requirements, here are some portion sizes for reference; 1 cup raspberries, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup navy beans, 85g tempeh, 1 large pear, $1\frac{1}{2}$ cup broccoli, 2 cup spinach, ? cup cooked chickpea, 2 medium apples.



Ideas to get more fiber
into your daily foods



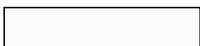
Does cooking affect the fiber
content in our food?

Getting more fibre into your day

Look for whole grain cereals and oats for breakfast. Trade out white rice, bread, and pasta for brown rice and whole grain products. Got a sweet tooth? Swap dessert for fruits like apples, oranges, guavas. Dark vegetables like artichokes, carrot, beets, broccoli, brussels are also super fibrous that go into an easy one-pot roast. Add legumes like kidney beans, chickpeas, or lentils to soups for extra fiber, and flax seeds and chia seeds to your salads.

Does cooking affect fibre content in our food?

There could be a misconception whereby cooking will result in fiber loss. That is not true! However, “fiber loss” can occur when you over peeled the skin of fruits and vegetables. Do you know? Peels of fruits and vegetables contain up to 31% of total fibers! Besides fiber, they also carry a high amount of nutrients. Next time when you’re having your apples, wash the skin clean and eat them straight with their skin on!



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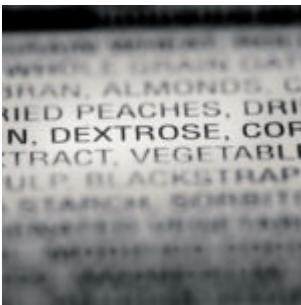


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