

GETTING ENOUGH FIBER...

It is likely that you're not getting enough fiber in your diet. Fiber is important for everyone, but especially if you have constipation, hemorrhoids, diverticulosis or irritable bowel syndrome. It is recommended that we ingest 25-35 grams of fiber per day, but the average American eats only 8-10 grams daily.

Not only is fiber a natural way to regulate your bowels, but studies have indicated that it may have other benefits as well. For instance, fiber may help lower your cholesterol, lower your risk of heart disease, boost immune system function and help prevent certain types of cancer.

Unfortunately, many people find it difficult to get the recommended 25-35 grams/day. Fortunately, there are simple ways to supplement the fiber in your diet:

1. SCAN FOR BRAN

As you walk down the cereal aisle in the grocery store, you will notice that many tout their bran or fiber content. Some of these actually have very little fiber. If you are picking a cereal for its fiber content then look for one that has at least 8 grams of fiber per serving. Good examples **ALL BRAN, FIBER ONE, 100% BRAN or Kashi "Good Friends"**.

2. GRAB THE FRUIT

Munch on a whole piece of fruit, in place of drinking a glass of juice. You'll get fiber, extra nutrients and fewer calories. Add raspberries, blackberries or blueberries to your high fiber breakfast cereal.

3. BRING ON THE BROWN

Use brown rice instead of white. Switch to whole-wheat varieties of pasta, flour, bread and crackers.

4. SCREEN FOR BEANS

Replace your typical side dishes with high-fiber dried peas and beans such as kidney, lentils or black-eyed peas.

5. GO NUTS

Jazz up salads, vegetables and snacks with almonds, sunflower seeds or soy nuts. Nuts and seeds add fiber and fun-to-chew crunch to foods. Just be careful with portion size and read labels, as many nuts are calorie-dense!

If it's tough for you to get your recommended 25-25 grams of fiber through diet alone, then try a daily supplement such as Citrucel, Benefiber, Metamucil or Fiber Sure. Citrucel and Benefiber tend to be less gas-producing. Benefiber and Fiber Sure dissolve completely in liquid (no grit) but are more expensive. The soluble fiber supplements may be especially useful in the treatment of alternating diarrhea/constipation and irritable bowel syndrome. When beginning a fiber supplement, **read the product label**. The actual fiber content varies greatly among products.

As with starting any form of fiber, we recommend that you start slowly. Start with a half serving daily for one week then increase to the recommended serving size. If you increase your daily fiber intake too quickly, then you may suffer from bloating and gas. Also, maintain adequate hydration. If you add fiber without increasing your fluid intake, then constipation and bloating may actually become worse.

Additional remedies for constipation:

- Vitamin C 2000-4000 mg per day.
- Magnesium oxide 200-800 mg per day. ("Old fashioned" Milk of Magnesia is inexpensive, works well and is safe to take for constipation. We recommend 1-2 TBSP taken nightly if needed. However, magnesium containing products should **not** be used by people with kidney disease.)
- Flaxseed. It must be ground to derive benefit. Two TBSP of ground flaxseed contains approximately 4 grams of fiber.
- Miralax (now available over the counter), 17 grams or 1 capful every other day as needed. Miralax is most effective for constipation when taken on a regular basis. (i.e. 3 times per week or every other day)

For more information about a high fiber diet please see:

http://www.utdol.com/patients/content/topic.do?topicKey=~6B9xAagpWk4qzZ&selectedTitle=1%7E150&source=search_result

<http://www.aboutconstipation.org/site/about-constipation/treatment/dietary-fiber>