

SOUTHERN

THANKSGIVING EDITION

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NOVEMBER 2020



# Fall in Love with Fiber



What is one nutrient we could all use more of? Fiber! Fiber is a type of carbohydrate in foods that come from plants, but cannot be broken down in your gut like other nutrients are. Even though fiber is not absorbed into the body, it still has a variety of important health benefits.

**HEALTH BENEFITS OF FIBER**  
Fiber is great for digestive health because it helps prevent constipation and provides food for all the good bacteria in your gut. It also promotes heart health by helping lower cholesterol, one risk factor for heart disease. In addition, eating more fiber helps manage blood sugar by preventing blood sugar spikes after you eat. Some studies even show that fiber may help lower the risk for certain types of cancer. Fiber helps you stay full longer, too, so you won't feel hungry and be tempted to snack as much. That can help you reach and stay at your goal weight.

**REACHING FIBER GOALS**  
According to the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans, women should try to get at least 25 grams of

fiber a day while men should aim for about 38 grams a day. Unfortunately, most Americans only eat around 10 - 15 grams of fiber per day. To find out how much fiber you are eating, look at the nutrition facts label on the back of food packages.

As you add more fiber-rich foods to your meals, make sure that you drink plenty of fluid. Fiber likes to absorb a lot of the water in your gut. If you don't drink enough fluid throughout the day, it can cause bloating or stomach pain. By increasing your fiber intake gradually over a few weeks your body will have time to adjust and minimize any temporary problems.

**TURN THANKSGIVING INTO A FIBER-FILLED FEAST**  
With the holidays just around the corner, now is the time to really bump up your fiber intake without missing out on all of your favorite festive foods. Things as simple as leaving the skin on your potatoes can go a long way toward increasing your fiber. You can also get more fiber by eating whole wheat bread or rolls, adding nuts to casseroles or salad and including plenty of fall vegetables in your Thanksgiving spread such as black-eyed peas, collard greens, carrots, broccoli and a green salad. Holiday desserts can even deliver fiber with fruits, vegetables or nuts in apple, sweet potato or pecan pies.

**EVEN MORE WAYS TO ADD FIBER**

One of the great things about fiber is it's found in a

wide variety of foods. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, peas, nuts and seeds are all good sources of fiber. There are so many easy swaps you can make throughout the day to increase your fiber. Instead of eating highly processed cereals, try a bowl of whole grain cereal or oatmeal topped with bananas, raisins or apple chunks. Add diced tomato, onion and bell pepper to your scrambled eggs. Instead of white rice, try brown rice. When you feel like having a snack, go for a piece of fruit, whole wheat crackers with cheese or dip some veggies in hummus or guacamole. You can also switch out a pulp free orange juice for one with pulp to squeeze in some extra fiber. Just focus on eating more plant foods throughout the day and you will be well on your way to achieving all of the amazing benefits of fiber!

Photo: Ella Olsson, Unsplash



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