The Roughage Solution

How to include more fiber in your diet

September 5, 2008 By Kellee Terrell

Eating a high-fiber diet—fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains—does more than keep us regular. It controls blood sugar levels, lowers low-density lipoprotein ("bad") cholesterol levels and aids in weight loss. Sounds great, but why are we not getting enough of it? According to the American Dietetic Association (ADA), the average American consumes only 15 grams of fiber a day—the recommended daily intake is 25 grams for women and 35 grams for men younger than 50, and 21 grams for women and 30 grams for men 51 or older.

Adding more bulk doesn't have to be a chore. Here are some simple tips:

Read the labels. Knowing what's in the food you eat is crucial to maintaining and building a healthier lifestyle.

Eat a high-fiber breakfast. If you can knock out 5–8 grams of fiber in the morning, that's a good start. Try a high-fiber cereal or instant oatmeal. FYI: Some flavored instant oatmeals are high in sugar.

Snack on fruits and veggies. During the day, opt for an apple or carrot sticks, instead of chips and cookies. But don't peel off the skin—that's where most of the fiber is.

Eat more beans! Add one-half cup of chickpeas to your salad, or have a side of black beans with your nachos.

Take it slow. Slowly work fiber into your diet; if you add too much too fast you might become gassy and constipated. Also, make sure you drink more water. Fiber will absorb it, making your stool softer.

FIBER FAKE OUT

We've seen the commercials for fiber supplements from Metamucil pills to Fiber Plus powder. But are they safe? Experts say yes—some doctors even prescribe them to patients with digestive issues.

We say: Do not rely on supplements alone, and if you are on other medications, speak with your

doctor about any possible drug interactions.

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Want an easy way to add fiber? Try Trader Joe's High Fiber Bread (multigrain or whole grain, $2.49). Each slice is packed with 6 grams of fiber. Make a sandwich and you have almost half the daily recommended intake.

FIBER-LOUS

Which foods pack a high-fiber punch? See below:

Banana (1)	3.1 g
Carrots (1 cup, raw)	3.1 g
Apple (1, raw w/skin)	3.3 g
Nuts (24 almonds)	3.3
Green beans (1 cup, cooked)	4 g
Sweet potato (1, baked w/skin)	4.8 g
Broccoli (1 cup, boiled)	5.1 g
Pear (1, w/skin)	5.1 g
Whole-wheat spaghetti (1 cup)	6.3 g
Frozen mixed vegetables (1 cup)	8 g
Chickpeas (1 cup, canned)	12.5 g
Baked beans w/franks (1 cup)	17.9 g

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.
http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/fiber-roughage-diet-15235-6367