



Fiber and **GUT HEALTH**

A healthy gut is essential
to human health

Your digestive tract, also known as the gut, is a complex organ. It breaks down the food you eat into nutrients that can be absorbed and carried throughout your body. There is a community of friendly bacteria living within your intestines that help support your gut health. These bacteria break down nutrients, produce compounds that send communications to the rest of the body, and influence your immune system. Research suggests that obesity, type 2 diabetes, inflammatory bowel disease, and colon cancer are all impacted by your gut's health.



Fiber helps support gut health

Dietary fiber comes from plants, including avocados and other fruits and vegetables, beans, nuts, seeds, and whole grains. It's a non-digestible carbohydrate that passes through your digestive system practically unchanged. Dietary fiber is the fuel your gut bacteria need to flourish and has an impact on digestion. Fiber also contributes to a feeling of fullness after a meal and helps to normalize bowel movements. Some studies suggest that high-fiber diets might also help with weight loss and regulating metabolism. Unfortunately, most people don't eat enough fiber in their diets.



How much fiber is enough?

The typical American only consumes 16 grams of fiber per day. The Daily Value (DV) or the recommended amount of total dietary fiber is 28 grams per day. This recommendation is based on a 2,000-calorie daily diet. Your fiber intake may need to be higher or lower, depending on your individual calorie needs.

FOOD LABEL READING TIP:

Not all nutrition facts labels list soluble and insoluble fiber separately. So, look for food choices with at least 10% DV dietary fiber or 3 grams of fiber per serving.

How to find foods with fiber

There are two different types of fiber important for gut health: soluble and insoluble. Both types of fiber have health benefits and support your gut health in different ways.

- Soluble fiber retains water and slows down digestion and nutrient absorption in your digestive tract. This fiber is found in some fruits and vegetables, such as avocados and oranges, as well as oat bran, nuts, seeds, beans, lentils, and peas.
- Insoluble fiber is found in foods such as wheat bran, fruit, vegetables, avocado, and whole grains. This type of fiber adds bulk to the stool and helps to prevent constipation and diverticular disease.



FOODS WITH NATURALLY GOOD SOURCES OF FIBER

FOOD	SERVING SIZE	DIETARY FIBER (GRAMS) PER SERVING
Almonds	1 ounce	4
Apple, raw, with skin	1 small	4
Avocado	1/3 medium	3
Banana, raw	1 large	4
Blueberries, raw	1 cup	4
Figs, dried	5 figs	4
Green peas, cooked	1/2 cup	5
Lentils, cooked	1/2 cup	8
Oatmeal, prepared with water	1 cup	4
Orange, raw	2-5/8" diameter	3
Pinto beans, canned, drained	1/2 cup	5
Pistachio nuts, raw	1 ounce	3
Prunes, dried and pitted	4 prunes	3
Whole wheat bread	2 ounce slice	4

Easy ways to keep your gut on track with fiber

- Eat a wide range of whole plant foods. A diet that contains an assortment of fruits and vegetables will lead to a diverse community of gut bacteria, which is better for your health.
- Eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables every day. Keep the edible skin on your fruits and vegetables when possible. As an example — eating the apple peel gives you two extra grams of fiber.
- Choose whole-grain products instead of those made with refined grains.
- Boost the fiber in your snacks. Try dipping your vegetable sticks into guacamole or another healthy dip.
- Start meals with a green tossed salad. Try adding fresh vegetables and avocados to a pasta salad to make it more substantial.
- Make-over your recipes with healthy ingredient swaps. Think of avocados as your go-to ingredient to add fiber and nutrients when cooking and baking in place of low fiber ingredients.



AVOCADO OATMEAL BREAKFAST COOKIE

Avocados, whole grains, cinnamon, and dates make for a delicious on-the-go breakfast.

NUTRITION FACTS PER SERVING:

170 calories
5g total fat
1g saturated fat
220mg sodium

28g carbohydrate
3g fiber, and
4g protein

Fresh avocados are a good source of fiber.

The soluble and insoluble fiber contained in avocados can be part of a balanced diet that supports a healthy gut.