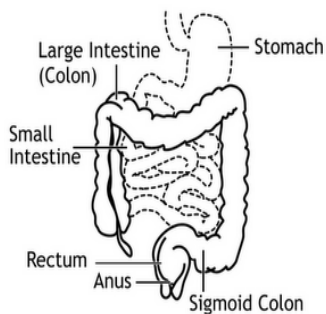


High Fiber Diet and Fiber Supplements

In recent years, the high fiber diet has received great attention. It has been shown to be useful in reducing serum cholesterol, reducing blood sugar, reducing the risk of colon cancer, and for our purposes, improving bowel function.



The colon, or large intestine, is the lower part of the gastrointestinal tract that is responsible for processing approximately one quart of liquid stool presented to it by the small intestine. The colon absorbs water from the liquid stool resulting in approximately one cup of solid stool.

The intestinal contractions control the rate at which the stool passes through the colon. When the contractions are sluggish or lazy, the waste moves too slowly. Because water is constantly being absorbed from the stool, the fecal mass becomes too dry and hard causing constipation. On the other hand, if the contractions are too fast, the stool moves too quickly and too little water is removed leaving the waste soft or watery.

High fiber foods help to normalize bowel function for both constipation *and* diarrhea. Fiber provides a bulking agent which can hold water in the stool and help prevent constipation. This bulk also gives the colon something to “hold onto” thereby helping to organize and regulate normal intestinal contractions. On the other hand, fiber can also act as a sponge to help sop up excess stool water and help to form a more solid stool for those patients with diarrhea. A high fiber diet helps the stool move more efficiently leaving less residual stool within the colon, therefore the colon is in a more decompressed state more often.



Unfortunately, the American diet is very low in dietary fiber. Most people consume less than 10 grams of fiber per day. Many patients believe they are following a high fiber diet, but in reality their diet falls short of the required amounts of fiber. In order to maintain good bowel regularity, most patients need 30-40 grams of fiber per day. This amount of fiber can generally be achieved through diet alone, but fiber supplements are often helpful as well. There are a variety of fiber supplements available on the market. Many fiber supplements are labeled as “bulk laxatives”.

This is not an accurate term because fiber is not a bowel stimulant like true laxatives. A better term would be “stool regulator”.

Dietary fiber can generate increased intestinal gas, so use caution and increase your fiber intake *gradually*. This will help avoid excess gas. Although fiber can cause gas, as your bowels begin to move more regularly, you will be able to expel the gas more efficiently and decrease the symptoms of discomfort and bloating from gas.

It is often difficult to make the transition to a high fiber diet, so adding fiber supplements is often helpful. The following is a list of some fiber supplements available today:

Metamucil

Capsules-take 5 capsules with 8 oz water 3-4 times a day. Each dose of 5 capsules contains 3 grams of fiber.

Powder-1 tsp contains 3 grams of fiber. Can take 3 times a day.

Wafers-2 wafers contain 3.4 grams of fiber.

FiberCon caplets-take 2 caplets with 8 oz water 3-4 times a day.

Benefiber:

Powder-2 tsp in 8 oz of any beverage or soft food 3 times a day.

Each dose contains 3 grams of fiber. This powder is essentially tasteless and can be “hidden” in most drinks or foods.

Capsules-3 capsules contain 3 grams of fiber

Konsyl-1 packet (teaspoon) in 8 oz juice or water 1-3 times a day. Each dose is 6 grams of fiber.

Citrucel-1 scoop contains 2 grams of fiber. Can take 3 times a day.

Fiber Choice-2 tablets contain 4 grams of fiber.

Fiber Sure-1 tsp contains 5 grams of fiber.

High Fiber Foods:

Product	Serving Size	Fiber content per serving
Multi grain bread	1 slice	1.5 grams
Flax seed bread	1 slice	1.5 grams
Whole wheat bread	1 slice	1.3 grams
Bran muffin w/ raisins	1 muffin	6 grams
Fiber One Cereal	½ cup	14 grams
All Bran Cereal	½ cup	10 grams
Kashi Go Lean High Fiber Cereal	1 cup	10 grams
Uncle Sam Cereal	¾ cup	10 grams
Raisin Bran Cereal	1 cup	7 grams
Oatmeal	1 cup	4 grams
Blackberries	¾ cup	6.7 grams
Raspberries	1 cup	9.2 grams
Strawberries	1 cup	3.1 grams
Peach	1 medium	2.3 grams
Graham crackers	2 squares	1.4 grams
Rye crackers	3 wafers	2.3 grams
Brown rice	1/3 cup	1.6 grams
Wild rice	1/3 cup	2.0 grams
Popcorn	3 cups	3.0 grams
Peas	½ cup	6.7 grams
Corn	½ ear	2.6 grams
Asparagus	½ cup	3.5 grams
Squash	1 cup	7.0 grams
Lima beans	½ cup	8.3 grams
String beans	½ cup	2.1 grams

This list is a general guide to help you in structuring your high fiber diet. It is by no means all-inclusive. Dietary information, including fiber content, is available on most food labels. Get used to reading food labels and try choosing foods with extra fiber. There are many products on the market today which provide extra fiber. There are a number of drinks, cereals and snack bars with fiber and even Splenda has a sugar packet that has fiber included. Greater variety can be achieved with a high-fiber diet by raising your fiber consciousness.

You can also look up the fiber content in a wide variety of foods on www.highfiberdiet.net or www.calorieking.com