

Oxford Pelvic Floor Services

# Information on fibre

Information for patients



## Information on fibre

Fibre is a waste product from your food which your body cannot digest and use. Generally, in Western countries, our diet does not contain as much fibre as it should for good health. We are often told that fibre is good for us and that we should eat more.

However, we know that for people with bowel control problems, eating more fibre can make matters worse. Fibre will make your bowel motions softer, and so more likely to leak. Fibre also helps to stimulate the bowel, and so can make you pass a motion more often with greater urgency.

## How does fibre work?

There are two types of fibre – soluble and insoluble. Plant foods mostly contain a combination of these two types. The table overleaf shows you which type of fibre is found in particular foods. The latest advice is that constipation is best alleviated by a combination of both types, as they each have a different effect on the gut.

Insoluble fibre is less easily broken down by the natural bacteria in your gut. However, it holds onto water very effectively, which helps increase the weight of your stools.

Soluble fibre is broken down effectively by enzyme-producing bacteria, naturally present in your colon. This produces energy which increases your bowel movement and produces gas. It can also cause your stools to become bulky, because of the increase in the amount of bacteria in your gut. Soluble fibre forms a gel-like substance which can bind to other substances in the gut. This has the additional benefits of lowering cholesterol levels and slowing down the entry of glucose into the blood, improving blood sugar levels.

## Should I avoid fibre in my diet?

We are not suggesting that you eat an unhealthy diet, but that it may be worth experimenting a little to see which foods make your control better or worse. This is a very individual thing; our bodies do not always react in the same way. It may be a case of trial and error to see which foods, if any, cause problems for you.

You should always eat some fruit and vegetables each day, but start by avoiding very high fibre foods (such as bran cereal) and fruit and vegetables that have a particularly high fibre content.

## Dietary Fibre Content (g)

Average Recommended Daily Adult Intake: 18-21g

### INSOLUBLE

Food Type	Portion Size	Fibre Content (g)	Food Type	Portion Size	Fibre Content (g)
<b>Breakfast Cereals</b>			<b>Pasta &amp; Rice</b> (Cooked weight)		
Cornflakes	30g	0.3	White Rice	180g	0.2
Weetabix	2 biscuits	4.4	Brown Rice	180g	1.4
All Bran	40g	10	White Spaghetti	220g	2.6
Muesli	40g	3	Brown Spaghetti	220g	8
Ready Brek	160g	2.2	<b>Nuts</b>		
Porridge	160g	1.3	Almonds	25g	1.9
Bran Flakes	30g	5.2	Coconut	25g	1.8
Fruit & Fibre	40g	2.8	Hazelnuts	25g	1.6
Sultana Bran	40g	4	Peanuts	25g	1.6
Special K	30g	0.5	Peanut Butter	25g	1.4
Shredded Wheat	2 biscuits	6.1	Brazil Nuts	25g	1.1
<b>Bread</b>			Walnuts	25g	0.9
White Bread	2 slices	1.5			
Brown Bread	2 slices	2.8			
Wholemeal	2 slices	4.5			
Wheat germ	2 slices	2.6			
High Bran	1 slice	3			
Pitta Bread	1	3			
Granary	2 slices	2.6			
Oatcakes	1	0.8			
Wholemeal Crackers	3	1			
Ryvita	2	2.4			
Digestives	1	0.4			

## SOLUBLE

Food Type	Portion Size	Fibre Content (g)	Food Type	Portion Size	Fibre Content (g)
<b>Fruit</b>			<b>Vegetables</b> (Medium portion)		
Apple (with peel)	1 (100g)	1.8	New Potatoes	175g	2.6
Apricots, dried	5	3.4	Jacket Potato (with skin)	180g	4.9
Banana	1 (100g)	1.1	Brussel Sprouts	90g	2.4
Grapes	100g	0.7	French Beans	90g	3.7
Nectarine	1 (150g)	1.7	Peas	70g	3.6
Peaches	1 (110g)	1.4	Cauliflower	90g	1.4
Oranges	1 (160g)	2.7	Broccoli	85g	2
Pears	1 (150g)	3	Carrots	80g	2
Prunes	3	1.7	Spinach	90g	1.9
Sultanas	1 tbs	0.6	Tomatoes	85g	0.85
Dates, dried	15g	0.6	Sweetcorn	85g	1.2
<b>Fruit (cooked)</b>			<b>Pulses</b> (Cooked weight)		
Blackcurrants	140g	3.9	Boiled Beans	30g	4
Gooseberries	140g	2.7	Split Peas	30g	2.8
Plums	140g	1.7	Baked Beans	30g	5
Rhubarb	140g	1.7	Butter Beans	30g	2.8
			Chickpeas	30g	3.4

## How to contact us

If you have any questions or need advice please contact the Advanced Nurse Practitioners, either by telephone or email.

Tel: **01865 235 881**

Email: **[pelvicfloor.advice@ouh.nhs.uk](mailto:pelvicfloor.advice@ouh.nhs.uk)**



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