Dietary Fiber

The 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans highlights that dietary fiber is often under-consumed. Dietary fiber is found in plants and is a type of carbohydrate. Dietary fiber is essential for healthy diets because it helps prevents obesity, improves blood sugar levels, decreases blood pressure and cholesterol levels, encourages healthy bowel movements, improves digestion, reduces risk of some cancers, and reduces inflammation. Listed below are tips for increasing fiber in Senior Nutrition Program meals, high-fiber ingredients found on nutrition labels, and a high-fiber foods table.

# Tips for Increasing Fiber

* Select whole-grain breads and cereals.
* Increase consumption of vegetables and fruits.
* Choose whole fruits and vegetables rather than fruit or vegetable juices.
* Include whole-grain flour, fortified cereals, or oatmeal into baked goods.
* Offer a high-fiber cereal for breakfast.
* Serve high-fiber foods, which are classified as having 5 or more grams of fiber.
* Add legumes to recipes, such as salads, soups, and pastas.

# High Fiber on Nutrition Label

* Alginate
* Beta-glucan soluble fiber
* Cellulose
* High amylose starch
* Inulin
* Pectin
* Polydextrose
* Psyllium husk
* Barley
* Brown rice
* Bulgur
* Oatmeal
* Quinoa
* Whole-grain corn
* Whole oats
* Whole rye
* Whole wheat

# High Fiber Foods

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Fruits** | **Serving Size** | **Grams of Fiber** |
| Apple (with skin) | 1 medium | 4.5 g |
| Banana | 1 medium | 3.0 g |
| Avocado | 1  | 13.5 g |
| Raspberries  | 1 cup | 8.0 g |
| Strawberries | 1 cup | 3.0 g |
| Orange | 1 medium | 3.0 g |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Vegetables** | **Serving Size** | **Grams of Fiber** |
| Peas | 1 cup | 9.0 g |
| Carrots | 1 cup, chopped | 3.5 g |
| Edamame | ½ cup | 4 g |
| Brussels sprouts | 1 cup | 4.0 g |
| Broccoli | 1 cup | 5.0 g |
| Lentils | 1 cup  | 15.5 g |
| Black beans | 1 cup | 10-15 g |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Grains** | **Serving Size** | **Grams of Fiber** |
| Quinoa | 1 cup | 5.0 g |
| Whole-wheat pasta | 1 cup | 6.0 g |
| Buckwheat | 1 cup | 4.5 g |
| Oatmeal | 1 cup | 5.0 g |
| Whole-wheat bread | 1 slice | 2.0 g |
| Brown rice  | 1 cup | 3.5 g |

*Adapted from* [*Dietary Guidelines for Americans, Food Sources of Dietary Fiber*](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/resources/2020-2025-dietary-guidelines-online-materials/food-sources-select-nutrients/food-0#:~:text=Food%20Sources%20of%20Dietary%20Fiber%20%20%20,%20%206.2%20%2050%20more%20rows%20) *and* [*Mayo Clinic Chart of High-Fiber Foods*](https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/high-fiber-foods/art-20050948)

# Nutrition Education

Fiber plays an important role in the health of older adults. Fiber helps with digestion, feeling full during meals, and preventing constipation. It can also help with decreasing some chronic conditions and diseases. Most older adults do not consume enough fiber throughout the day. Providing nutrition education can help participants to understand how increasing fiber intake is good for their health. See the [National Resource Center on Nutrition and Aging, Program Basics](https://acl.gov/senior-nutrition/program-basics) for more resources.

# Resources

[Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans-2020-2025.pdf)

[Fiber Resources](https://www.nutrition.gov/topics/whats-food/fiber) (Nutrition.gov)

[Fiber Resources](https://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/fiber) (USDA National Agricultural Library)

[Interactive Nutrition Facts Label: Dietary Fiber](https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/interactivenutritionfactslabel/assets/InteractiveNFL_DietaryFiber_March2020.pdf) (FDA)

[New Nutrition Label Facts](https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-education-resources-materials/new-nutrition-facts-label) (FDA)

[Nutrition Needs for Older Adults: Fiber](https://acl.gov/sites/default/files/nutrition/Nutrition-Needs_Fiber_FINAL-2.19-FINAL_508.pdf) (NRCNA)

[The Nutrition Source: Fiber](https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/carbohydrates/fiber/) (Harvard School of Public Health)

*Disclaimer: All resources provided are from government websites or have been gathered from the National Agricultural Library.*