

Dietary Fibre

Nutrition and Dietetic Department Patient Information Leaflet



What is Dietary Fibre?

Dietary Fibre is an important part of a healthy balanced diet. It helps prevent heart disease, diabetes, weight gain and some cancers, and can play a role in improving digestive health.

Many people do not get enough fibre. We need **30g** of fibre every day to keep our digestion working at its best. We also need different types of fibre to get the most benefit.

There are two different types of fibre, soluble and insoluble.

Soluble fibre: such as fruits and vegetables, oats and golden linseeds can be digested by your body. If you have constipation, gradually increasing sources of soluble fibre may help soften your stools and make them easier to pass.

Insoluble fibre: such as wholemeal, bran, nuts and seeds, cannot be digested. They pass through your gut without being broken down. If you have constipation, gradually increasing insoluble fibre may help as it adds bulk to your stool and helps it pass through your digestive system more quickly. If you have diarrhoea, you should limit the amount of insoluble fibre in your diet.

If you have a digestive disorder such as Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) / Diverticulitis / Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) you may need to modify the type and amount of fibre in your diet in accord with your symptoms.

Fluids

When taking a high fibre diet or increasing fibre in your diet it is important to drink plenty of fluid; at least 6-8 cups or glasses per day of water, tea, coffee, squash, fruit juice etc. Constipation may result from a high fibre diet without sufficient fluid.

Which foods contain fibre?

All plant foods will contain fibre. Wholemeal and wholegrain products will contain considerably more fibre than the white refined versions. You can look at food packaging labels when possible however most fresh fruit and vegetables will not have a fibre content listed.

To be a 'high fibre' food, the product must contain at least **6g of fibre per 100g** of product or at least **3g of fibre per 100kcal** of product.

What if I am advised to follow a low fibre diet?

If you have a digestive disorder such as Irritable Bowel Syndrome, Diverticulitis, Inflammatory Bowel Disease, or you are preparing for / or recently had bowel surgery then you may have been advised to follow a low fibre diet. You may need to modify the type and amount of fibre in your diet in accordance with your symptoms.

Low fibre diets are usually for symptom relief and are not usually recommended for long term use.

Try following a low fibre diet for **6 weeks**, if you found the low fibre diet has improved your symptoms you should now gradually re-introduce fibre back into your diet. This should be done slowly to enable you to determine the types and amounts of fibre you can tolerate before provoking symptoms.

Examples of foods low in fibre:

Bread and flour	White bread, white rolls, cream crackers, plain scone, pitta bread, breadsticks and plain sponge cake.
Cereals	Rice Krispies, cornflakes.
Pasta and rice	Freshly cooked white pasta or white rice.
Fruit	Fruit juice without bits and soft canned fruit like peaches, pears and mandarins.
Vegetables	Cooked and peeled root vegetables without seeds, pips or skin such as carrots, parsnips, and potato (e.g. chips, mash, roasts with no skin).
Meat / fish / alternatives	Plain meat and poultry (such as beef, lamb, pork, ham, corned beef, chicken or turkey), fish (fried, tinned, poached or in plain sauce), tofu.
Dairy and eggs	Cheese, eggs, milk, cream, butter / margarine, smooth yoghurt with no fruit bits.
Soup / sauces	Clear or cream soups, milk or cheese sauces and gravy.
Desserts	Plain sponge, Swiss roll, ice cream, custard, jelly, milk puddings.
Drinks	Tea and coffee, herbal tea, squash, water.
Other	Stock cubes, bottled tomato sauces, mayonnaise, salad cream, beef / yeast extract, ice lollies, boiled sweets, mints, honey, sugar, chocolate, seedless jam.

The suggestions below give you some ideas to get started on a **low fibre** diet.

Breakfast

- White toast with spread and seedless jam or shred-less marmalade.
- Cornflakes or Rice Krispies with milk and a glass of fruit juice (without bits).

Light meal

- White bread sandwich with meat / fish / cheese / eggs.
- Omelette.
- Poached or scrambled eggs on white toast.
- Canned mackerel / sardines on white toast.
- Tuna pasta with mayonnaise (no sweetcorn).

Main meal

- White pasta or white rice with sauce and chicken, beef, pork, lamb or tofu.
- Roast meat with potatoes (no skins) .
- Chicken in gravy with potatoes (no skins).

Snacks

- Plain or cheese scone.
- Tea biscuit / ginger nuts or cream crackers.

Reintroduction of higher fibre foods

Gradually increasing the amount of fibre in your diet may relieve symptoms by achieving soft, bulky and regular stools. If symptoms are worse after large meals, try eating little and often.

It may take 2-3 weeks for your body to adapt to the increased fibre in your diet. You may notice increased wind or bloating at first, however this is normal and should soon settle.

Foods that contain soluble fibre such as fruit, vegetables and oats may be better tolerated at first.

Aim for one high-fibre food at each meal. When you increase your dietary fibre, it is also important to take plenty of fluids.

Aim for 6-8 cups (1.5-2 litres) a day.

(Unless you have been advised differently by a health care professional).

For example:

Week 1: Try eating oats such as porridge / flapjack.

Week 2: Try eating the skins on potatoes or of the lower fibre fruit and vegetables.

Week 3: Trial an extra portion of fruit or vegetables from the low or medium fibre list.

Week 4: Swap a white carbohydrate source for a wholemeal rice, pasta bread etc.

Week 5: Swap a low fibre breakfast for a higher fibre alternative i.e. bran flakes.

Week 6: Try re-introducing fruits and vegetables from the higher fibre list.

Once you have established how much fibre you can tolerate try varying the fibre sources on a daily basis to achieve a varied diet.

If you have been advised to follow a low fibre diet and / or are unable to re-introduce a sufficient amount back into your diet, you may need to take a multivitamin. This should be discussed with your Doctor and / or Dietitian.

Product	High Fibre Foods	Medium Fibre	Low / Lower Fibre
Bread and flour	Wholemeal Bread Granary Bread Wholemeal Pitta	50:50 Bread Tortillas	White Bread White Pitta Bread White Flour White Chapatti Naan Bread
Cereals	Weetabix Shredded Wheat Shreddies Porridge Oats Muesli All Bran Branflakes Fruit n Fibre		Cornflakes Rice Kripsies Rice and wheat flakes (e.g. Tesco Special Flakes, Sainsbury's Balance cereal)
Pasta and rice – should be eaten while still hot	Whole wheat Spaghetti and Pasta Brown Rice		White Rice White Pasta White Noodles
Biscuit, cakes and puddings	Rye crispbreads Digestives Bran biscuits Wholemeal scones Oat cakes Fig rolls Fruit cake Flapjacks		Rich tea Shortcake Cream crackers Crispbread Water-biscuits Ice cream Lollies Sorbets Jelly Milk puddings Coconut rings

Product	High Fibre Foods	Medium Fibre	Low / Lower Fibre
Drinks	Fruit juice with bits Fruit and vegetables Smoothies containing high fibre fruits and vegetables	Smoothies made with fruit and vegetables from the lower fibre list within the daily allowance	Water Squash Tea Coffee Cocoa Ovaltine
Fruit All fruit will contain fibre. If you're following a low fibre diet, where possible avoid skins and seeds, keep to a maximum of 2 portions and spread fruit throughout the day.	Banana chips Blackberries Blackcurrants Cranberries Currants Dates dried Figs Prunes Raisins Raspberries Redcurrants Sultanas Coconut Pear Mango Passionfruit Coconut Dried apricot	Currents Dates raw Kiwi Gooseberries Oranges Peaches Plums Banana Strawberries	Apple Fresh apricot Cherries Grapefruit Melon Pineapple Rhubarb Satsumas Lemon Lychees

Product	High Fibre Foods	Medium Fibre	Low / Lower Fibre
Vegetables and Pulses	Baked beans Broad beans Butter beans Chick peas Kidney beans Lentils Olives Peas Sweetcorn	Avocado Beansprouts Parsnips Spinach Sweet-potato Spring-greens Yam	Asparagus Beetroot Carrot Celery Cucumber Lettuce Mushrooms Onions Swede Tomatoes
Nuts and seeds and miscellaneous	Peanuts Sunflower seeds Trail Mix Bombay Mix Nut butter Jam with seeds		Honey Lemony curd Marmite Boiled sweets Corn flour Rice-based snacks Seedless jam

Other sources of information:



Hospital Dietitians – Blackpool Victoria hospital
Telephone: 01253 956777

Community Dietitians – St. Annes health centre
Telephone: 01253 957871



Hospital switchboard

Telephone: 01253 300000

Patient Relations Department

The Patient Relations Department offer impartial advice and deal with any concerns or complaints the Trust receives.



You can contact them via tel: 01253 955589
or by email: bfwh.patientrelations@nhs.net

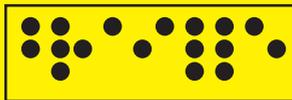


You can also write to us at: Patient Relations
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website: www.bfwh.nhs.uk

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