

Add More Fiber to Your Diet: 15 Tips from Dietitians

About 95% of adults don't get enough fiber, which supports digestion and lowers the risk of heart disease, cancers and type 2 diabetes.

May 27, 2026 By American Institute for Cancer Research and Cara Rosenbloom

Key Takeaways:

- About 95 percent of U.S. adults fall short on fiber, even though experts recommend around 30 grams per day. It's vital to get enough fiber, since it supports digestion, helps control appetite and lowers the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes and certain cancers.
- Simple food swaps can make a big difference. Adding more plant-based foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, nuts and seeds can help you meet your daily fiber goals.
- Dietitians are experts when it comes to helping you add more fiber to the diet. In this blog, dietitians offer 15 easy ways to add high-fiber foods to meals and snacks, plus provide a chart with common fiber-rich foods.

Only [5%](#) of Americans get enough fiber each day. That means a whopping 95 percent of U.S. adults lack fiber in their diet. Why does this matter? Getting enough fiber is essential for a healthy digestive system and regularity. Eating fiber-rich foods helps you feel full, which is vital for weight management and appetite control. And here's another big reason: fiber helps lower cholesterol and blood sugar levels, and it helps reduce the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes and certain cancers.

A recent AICR survey showed that only 38 percent of Americans are aware of the link between low-fiber diets and increased cancer risk. Let's boost knowledge by sharing this vital information: fiber matters! AICR recommends at least 30 grams of fiber per day from a variety of plant-based foods.

If you are not getting enough fiber, it may help to learn simple ways to add high-fiber foods into your meals and snacks. So, we reached out to dietitians to ask them: What are some simple ways to add more fiber to the diet? Here is what we learned.

Which Foods Contain Fiber?

Fiber is only found in foods that come from plants. That means animal-based foods such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs and dairy do not contain fiber. Plant-based foods that contain fiber include:

- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Whole grains
- Beans and lentils
- Soy foods
- Nuts
- Seeds

Here is a chart with commonly eaten foods that contain the most fiber. Remember, your goal is to get around 30 grams of fiber each day.

Food	Serving size	Grams of fiber
Vegetables and fruits		
Blackberries or raspberries	1 cup	8–9 g
Avocado	½ medium	7 g
Brussels sprouts	1 cup	6.5 g
Pear	1 medium	5 g
Apple	1 medium	4 g
Green peas	½ cup	4 g
Beans		
Beans such as black, kidney, cannellini, lima, navy, etc.	¾ cup cooked	8 –11 g
Chickpeas or lentils	¾ cup cooked	6 g
Edamame (green soybeans)	¾ cup (pods removed)	6 g
Firm tofu	¾ cup	4 g
Nuts and seeds		
Chia seeds	2 tbsp	10 g
Flax seeds	2 tbsp (ground)	4 g
Almonds	¼ cup	4 g
Whole grains		

Bran cereal with psyllium	1/3 cup (1 ounce)	12 g
Bran flakes cereal	¾ cup	5–6 g
Quinoa	1 cup cooked	5 g
Buckwheat	1 cup cooked	4.5 g
Whole-wheat pasta	1 cup cooked	4.5 g
Oatmeal	1 cup cooked	4 g
Whole-wheat bread	2 slices	4 g

Fiber lowers the risk of [colorectal cancer](#). In fact, studies show that each 10 gram increase in fiber intake is linked with a 7 percent lower risk of colorectal cancer. And eating three daily servings (90 grams) of whole grains such as oats, brown rice or whole wheat lowers colorectal cancer risk by 17 percent.

Fifteen Ideas for Increasing Fiber

Now you know which plant-based foods are highest in fiber. Here are 15 tips from dietitians to help you add these foods into your favorite meals and snacks.

Tips for adding whole grains

- Snack on popcorn instead of potato chips. A 3-cup serving of air-popped popcorn provides 3.5 grams of fiber. Daniella Wolf, RD, CDE
- Make stuffed peppers with quinoa instead of white rice to add 5 grams of fiber. Jeanna Brouwer, RD, CSO, LDN
- Triple your fiber intake by switching from regular to whole wheat pasta. One cup of cooked whole wheat pasta has 6 grams of fiber, while regular pasta has just 2 grams of fiber. Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Tips for adding vegetables and fruit

- Add a cup of raspberries to your favorite breakfast for an instant fiber boost. They have 8 grams of fiber per cup. —Emily Hoy, MS, RD, LDN

- Upgrade your pesto pasta with a half-cup chopped artichoke hearts, half-cup white beans, fresh spinach and sun-dried tomatoes. This adds about 12 grams of fiber. —Brenna Howsepian, RDN, CDCES
- Kiwi has 2 grams of fiber per fruit. Most people peel kiwi, but the skin is edible and adds an extra 1-2 grams of fiber. Wash it well and enjoy your kiwi with the skin intact. —Daniella Wolf, RD, CDE
- Add a half-cup of cooked green peas to your next serving of rice or pasta. This adds 4-5 grams of fiber. —Shauna Lindzon, RD

Tips for adding beans and soy

- Drain and rinse half a cup of cannellini beans, blend until smooth and stir into pasta sauce for a creamy texture and 6 grams of fiber. —Sydney Russell, MS, RDN, LDN
- Next time you're making chili, add some chickpeas to up your fiber game. You'll get an extra 9-11grams of fiber per 15 ounce can, plus some added plant-based protein. —Shelby Robinson, MA, RD, CSO, LDN
- Crumble a package of tempeh into a heated skillet sprayed with olive oil and add taco seasoning. Tempeh has 10 grams of fiber per serving and makes tasty plant-based tacos. Add tempeh to taco shells and top with diced avocado and pico de gallo. —Caitlin Russell, MS, RD

Tips for adding nuts and seeds

- When baking or making a breadcrumb coating, replace a quarter cup of flour or breadcrumbs with a quarter cup of ground flaxseeds. This provides an additional 8 grams of fiber, plus omega-3 fatty acids. —Jean LaMantia, RD

- Add chia seeds to yogurt bowls, smoothies or oatmeal. One tablespoon of chia seeds has roughly 5 grams of fiber. —Sarah Glinski, RD
- Snack on a small handful (1 ounce) of almonds to get about 4 grams of fiber. Tip: An ounce is about 23 almonds. —Cara Rosenbloom, RD
- Mix oatmeal with cocoa powder and chia seeds, since all three ingredients add fiber. Two tablespoons of chia seeds have 10 grams of fiber, one tablespoon of unsweetened baking cocoa powder has 2 grams of fiber, and a half cup of dry oatmeal has 4 grams of fiber. —Ciersten Deardorf, MS, RDN, CSO, LD
- Toss some sunflower seeds in a salad for a little crunch and added fiber. Two tablespoons of sunflower seeds have 2 grams of fiber. —Nicole Mazur RD, LDN, CNSC

Fiber Boost: Quick & Practical Goals

Now that you have read the dietitian's tips above, you can use your favorite high-fiber ingredients to create your own fiber boosts. Here are five goals to keep in mind:

1. Start your day strong: Choose high-fiber breakfasts like oatmeal, whole grain cereal or yogurt topped with chia seeds.
2. Swap to whole grains: Replace white bread, rice and pasta with whole grain versions to easily double or triple your fiber intake.
3. Add beans to meals: Toss beans into soups, salads, pasta dishes or tacos for a simple fiber boost.
4. Snack smarter: Reach for fiber-rich options like fruits, popcorn, nuts or seeds instead of low-fiber processed snacks.
5. Mix it in: Add vegetables like spinach, peas or broccoli to pasta, rice and casseroles

How To Increase Fiber without Creating Digestive Issues

When increasing fiber in your diet, it's best to follow some basic guidelines so your digestive system adjusts comfortably.

- Increase fiber gradually: Add fiber slowly over one to two weeks instead of jumping from low to high intake in one day. This helps prevent bloating, gas and stomach cramps.
- Drink more water: Fiber absorbs water to move smoothly through the digestive system.
If you increase fiber without increasing fluids, you may worsen constipation.
- Spread fiber across meals: Don't load all your fiber into one meal. Instead, distribute fiber throughout the day (breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks) to avoid digestive discomfort.

Temporary gas or bloating is normal when increasing fiber. If symptoms are severe or persistent, slow down the rate at which you're increasing your fiber. People with digestive disorders such as irritable bowel syndrome may need specific types or amounts of fiber. Work with your healthcare team to figure out what works best for you.

Cara Rosenbloom is a registered dietitian, health journalist and the author of two award-winning books, "Nourish: Whole Food Recipes Featuring Seeds, Nuts and Beans" and "Food to Grow On."

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