

Fiber in Your Diet

There are many names for fiber – **dietary fiber, total fiber, or just fiber**. Eating foods that contain fiber is good for your health. Two main types of fiber are **dietary fiber** which is parts of plants that we cannot digest (sources include fruits, vegetables, legumes, and whole grain foods); and “**functional**” fiber which is added to some foods. Examples include oat bran, pectin, and psyllium. Functional fibers have different effects on the body such as decreasing blood cholesterol or increasing stool bulk. Three facts about fiber are:

- Total fiber in your diet is the sum of dietary fiber plus functional fiber.
- Eating foods with fiber can help keep your digestive tract healthy.
- Legumes, e.g. lentils and dried beans, are a good source of dietary fiber.

Here are a few tips for increasing dietary fiber in your diet:

- Two or more times each week serve bean, pea, or lentil main dishes instead of meat, chicken, or fish.
- Serve whole grain bread with dinner when it fits into the meal.
- Eat a whole orange instead of orange juice for breakfast more often.
- Have fresh fruit for dessert instead of sweets.
- Grate fresh carrot into cole slaw and other salads.
- Add sliced banana, peach, or other fruit to your cereal.
- Keep prepared carrot and celery sticks, cucumber rounds, and other fresh vegetables at work for a quick high fiber snack.
- Keep whole wheat crackers at work for an easy high fiber snack.

These tips will help you include enough fiber in your diet for good health.

Source: Nutrition for Health and Fitness: Fiber in Your Diet. FCS 8130. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>