

To prevent or treat constipation, it is recommended that you follow a high-fiber diet. A high-fiber diet contains at least 20 to 35 grams of fiber per day. Fiber grams of foods are typically listed on all packaged foods. The amounts listed are for individual servings.

HELPFUL HINTS

- Add fiber to your diet gradually. Increasing fiber too quickly can cause gas, cramping, diarrhea, or bloating.
- Fiber absorbs large amounts of water. Drink plenty of fluids with increased fiber intake—at least 8 cups per day to prevent constipation.
- Look at food labels for those foods containing whole grain or whole wheat first in the ingredient list. Wheat flour usually means white flour, which is low in fiber.
- Highest fiber-containing foods (with 6 grams or more per serving) include kidney, baked, and navy beans and “all bran”-type cereals.
- Most fiber-containing foods have between 1 and 4 grams of fiber per serving.

WAYS TO INCREASE DAILY FIBER INTAKE

Fruits and Vegetables

- Eat raw fruits and vegetables, as they typically contain more fiber than cooked or canned products or juice.
- Eat dried fruit.
- Remember that the skin of fruits and vegetables contains fiber.

Bread, Cereals, Rice, and Pasta

- Whole grain, whole wheat, cracked wheat, stone ground, whole oat, or rye breads and crackers.
- Whole wheat pastas.
- Barley, bulgur, millet, and wild and brown rice.
- Cereals made with wheat, corn, oat, or rice bran, whole grains, or wheat germ.

Meats, Fish, Poultry, Dried Beans, Eggs, and Nuts

- Excellent fiber sources include baked beans and kidney, pinto, lima, garbanzo, and navy beans; lentils; yellow or black-eyed peas; split green peas; nuts; and seeds.

Milk, Yogurt, and Cheese

- There is little fiber in these types of products, but fiber can be added to them (by adding fruit or nuts to yogurt).

Sweets and Snacks

- Popcorn, desserts with raw fruit, cakes and cookies made with oatmeal, whole wheat pretzels.

SAMPLE MENU

Breakfast

“All bran”-type cereal
Whole wheat toast with margarine
Apple
Coffee

Snack

Graham crackers
Water or milk

Lunch

Split pea soup
Turkey sandwich on whole wheat bread with mayonnaise, lettuce, and tomato
Orange
Fruit milkshake
Water or iced tea

Snack

Whole wheat blueberry muffin with margarine
Iced tea

Dinner

Cucumber and shaved carrot salad with vinegar and oil-type dressing
Baked fish
Brown rice with peas
Rye bread with margarine
Water
Oatmeal raisin cookies

Snack

Banana
Chunky peanut butter on whole grain toast
Water

Patients with diverticulosis can follow a high-fiber diet to prevent inflammation of the intestines, constipations, and hemorrhoids. Certain fiber-containing foods cannot be eaten by patients with diverticulosis, as they may settle in pockets in the colon and cause irritation. The foods to avoid include nuts, seeds, kernels, and foods that contain them, such as berries, popcorn, corn, chunky peanut butter, figs, jams, preserves, and foods with poppy, sesame, or caraway seeds.