

High-fiber foods

The American Heart Association Eating Plan suggests that you eat foods that are high in soluble and insoluble [fiber](#). Foods that are high in soluble fiber, including oat bran, oatmeal, beans, peas, rice bran, barley, citrus fruits, strawberries, and apple pulp, have been shown to reduce blood cholesterol. It is recommended that people eat 30 to 50 grams of soluble and insoluble fiber per day.

The greatest cholesterol-lowering effect of soluble fiber occurs in people who have [high cholesterol](#) levels. Eating more soluble fiber alone without making other dietary changes is found to lower cholesterol about 2% to 4%. ¹ A recent study found that a dietary fiber intake of 30 grams lowered the risk of [coronary artery disease](#) (CAD) by 12% in U.S. men and women. ²

Insoluble fiber doesn't seem to affect blood cholesterol; however, it promotes healthy bowel movement. Foods that are high in insoluble fiber include whole wheat breads, wheat cereals, wheat bran, cabbage, beets, carrots, brussels sprouts, turnips, cauliflower, and apple skin. Fiber from such foods is better for the bowel than fiber supplements, such as psyllium seed products.

However, psyllium (a common ingredient in nonprescription fiber supplements and laxatives) has been used to boost the effectiveness of some [lipid](#)-lowering drugs while reducing the stomach upset commonly caused by those drugs. ³ These products are not recommended to replace foods as a source of fiber.

Psyllium may significantly reduce cholesterol in people who are already eating a low-fat diet.

List of High Fiber Foods

(The fiber count for most packaged foods can be found on the label.)

FRUIT	AMOUNT	TOTAL FIBER (grams)
Apples with skin	1 medium	5.00
Apricot	3 medium	0.98
Apricots, dried	5 pieces	2.89
Banana	1 medium	3.92
Blueberries	1 cup	4.18
Cantaloupe, cubes	1 cup	1.28
Figs, dried	2 medium	3.74
Grapefruit	1/2 medium	6.12
Orange, navel	1 medium	3.40
Peach	1 medium	2.00
Peaches, dried	3 pieces	3.18
Pear	1 medium	5.08
Plum	1 medium	1.00
Raisins	1.5 oz box	1.60
Raspberries	1 cup	8.34
Strawberries	1 cup	3.98
VEGETABLES	AMOUNT	TOTAL FIBER (grams)
Avocado (fruit)	1 medium	11.84
Beets, cooked	1 cup	2.85
Beet greens	1 cup	4.20
Bok choy, cooked	1 cup	2.76
Broccoli, cooked	1 cup	2.30

Brussels sprouts	1 cup	2.84
Cabbage, cooked	1 cup	4.20
Carrot	1 medium	2.00
Carrot, cooked	1 cup	5.22
Cauliflower, cooked	1 cup	3.43
Cole slaw	1 cup	4.00
Collard greens, cooked	1 cup	2.58
Corn, sweet	1 cup	4.66
Green beans	1 cup	3.95
Celery	1 stalk	1.02
Kale, cooked	1 cup	7.20
Onions, raw	1 cup	2.88
Peas, cooked	1 cup	8.84
Peppers, sweet	1 cup	2.62
Pop corn, air-popped	3 cups	3.60
Potato, baked w/skin	1 medium	4.80
Spinach, cooked	1 cup	4.32
Summer squash, cooked	1 cup	2.52
Sweet potato, cooked	1 cup	5.94
Swiss chard, cooked	1 cup	3.68
Tomato	1 medium	1.00
Winter squash, cooked	1 cup	5.74
Zucchini, cooked	1 cup	2.63
CEREAL, GRAINS, PASTA	AMOUNT	TOTAL FIBER (grams)
Bran cereal	1 cup	19.94
Bread, whole wheat	1 slice	2.00
Oats, rolled dry	1 cup	12.00
Pasta, whole wheat	1 cup	6.34
Rice, dry brown	1 cup	7.98
BEANS, NUTS, SEEDS	AMOUNT	TOTAL FIBER (grams)
Almonds	1 oz	4.22
Black beans, cooked	1 cup	14.92
Cashews	1 oz	1.00
Flax seeds	3 tbs	6.97
Garbanzo beans, cooked	1 cup	5.80
Kidney beans, cooked	1 cup	13.33
Lentils, red cooked	1 cup	15.64
Lima beans, cooked	1 cup	13.16
Peanuts	1 oz	2.30
Pistachio nuts	1 oz	3.10
Pumpkin seeds	1/4 cup	4.12
Soybeans, cooked	1 cup	7.62
Sunflower seeds	1/4 cup	3.00
Walnuts	1 oz	3.08

More on Types of Fiber: Soluble Fiber vs. Insoluble Fiber

Both soluble and insoluble fiber are undigested. They are therefore not absorbed into the bloodstream. Instead of being used for energy, fiber is excreted from our bodies. **Soluble fiber forms a gel when mixed with liquid, while insoluble fiber does not.** Insoluble fiber passes through our intestines largely intact.

Insoluble Fiber

Functions of Insoluble Fiber
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• move bulk through the intestines• control and balance the pH (acidity) in the intestines
Benefits of Insoluble Fiber
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• promote regular bowel movement and prevent constipation• remove toxic waste through colon in less time• help prevent colon cancer by keeping an optimal pH in intestines to prevent microbes from producing cancerous substances
Food Sources of Insoluble Fiber
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vegetables such as green beans and dark green leafy vegetables• Fruit skins and root vegetable skins• Whole-wheat products• Wheat oat• Corn bran• Seeds & Nuts

Soluble Fiber

Functions of Soluble Fiber
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• bind with fatty acids• prolong stomach emptying time so that sugar is released and absorbed more slowly
Benefits of Soluble Fiber
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• lower total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol (the Bad cholesterol) therefore reducing the risk of heart disease• regulate blood sugar for people with diabetes
Food Sources of Soluble Fiber
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oat/Oat bran• Dried beans and peas• Nuts• Barley• Flax seed• Fruits such as oranges and apples• Vegetables such as carrots• Psyllium husk