



What is Fiber?

- Dietary fiber is the term given to plant-based foods that the human body cannot digest. There are many different types of dietary fiber such as fruits, vegetables, beans and legumes, whole grains and nuts. Including these foods in your daily diet is one of the most important ways you can help your digestive system function efficiently.
- Only 5% of Americans consume the recommended daily amount of 25-30 grams of fiber each day. The average American consumes around 15 grams of dietary fiber each day.

What fiber does in the body:

- Lowers blood cholesterol levels which reduces the risk of heart disease.
- May reduce the risk of several cancers, including colon and rectal cancer, by binding to potentially toxic bile acids, moving food more quickly through the intestines and exerting beneficial effects on gut bacteria.
- May protect against other cancers such as breast and prostate.

- Helps to stabilize blood sugar levels.
- Gel-forming fiber (psyllium and guar gum) may also facilitate weight loss.
- Helps to reduce the harmful free radicals which damage the skin and slow down the aging process of the skin.

Daily Recommend Intake:

- 25-30 grams a day from food, not supplements.

Therapeutic uses of fiber supplements:

- Fiber supplements should not be considered a substitute for a high fiber diet; however, they may be useful in certain circumstances.
- Fiber supplements are available in several forms such as oat bran, rice bran, psyllium seed, flaxseeds and guar gum.
- They are used to treat constipation, irritable bowel syndrome, high cholesterol and obesity.
- Fiber supplements can decrease the absorption of certain medications such as aspirin. They can also reduce blood sugar levels, requiring adjustment of your medications or insulin if you have diabetes.
- If you plan to start a fiber supplementation, start with small amounts to minimize problems with gas and be sure to drink plenty of fluids every day.
- Currently there is no evidence that daily use of fiber supplements such as psyllium or methylcellulose is harmful.
- Check with your physician before starting a fiber supplementation.

