

# fiber

## FIBER

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### The Facts on Fibre

Fibre, also known as bulk or roughage, is a substance found in all plants that are eaten for food; and it is vital for the health and proper function of the intestines and the colon. We consume fibre in fruits, vegetables and grains, but interestingly enough, it is the part of the plant that we can't digest. Fibre absorbs water and adds bulk to the diet, which makes you feel full faster. This helps prevent overeating, which also helps you control your weight.

### Types of Fibre

Fibres can be broken down into two main groups—soluble fibre and insoluble fibre. This describes whether or not they dissolve to some degree in water. Each plant contains varying amounts of both kinds of fibre. Insoluble fibre possesses passive water-attracting properties that help to improve bowel function. Soluble fibre undergoes metabolic processing through fermentation, resulting in significant health-promoting effects. As part of a healthy diet, doctors recommend consuming a minimum of at least 20–35 grams of dietary fibre each day. Most people, however, get less than half that amount in their diet. Because fibre absorbs water, it is vital that you increase your water intake as you increase your fiber consumption. If not, the extra fibre will actually have the opposite effect and begin to clog the intestines, harden the stool and make bowel movements uncomfortable.

### In the Body

Both types of fibre perform important functions within the body. Insoluble fibre absorbs water, softens stools and moves materials through the intestines. It also helps to balance the pH (acidity)

levels inside the intestines. These actions work to prevent constipation by promoting regular bowel movements and removing toxic wastes from the colon more quickly. Soluble fiber binds with fatty acids and prolongs stomach emptying time so that sugar is released and absorbed more slowly. It helps to lower LDL cholesterol and regulate blood sugar levels.



### Specific Benefits

Fibre's most common benefit is the regularity that it promotes. The average person should have at least one if not two soft, formed bowel movements each day without any straining or effort. Dietary fibre encourages normal bowel function, and by so doing decreases the occurrence of constipation, diverticular disease and other inflammatory bowel conditions. High-fibre diets have also been shown to reduce the risk of certain conditions. High levels of dietary fibre have been linked to a lower risk of heart disease. Characterized by a build-up of cholesterol-filled plaque in the coronary arteries, heart disease is a leading cause of death for both men and women. High-fibre foods, such as legumes, whole fruits, oats and bran, are also low on the glycemic index. A diet high in these foods helps lower the risk of type 2 diabetes.

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**Fibre is a key** component of a healthy diet. It provides a host of benefits to several body systems. As most of us don't get enough fibre in our daily foods, supplementation is a great alternative. Nature's Sunshine offers a variety of supplements that help ensure that you get the right amount of dietary fiber each day.

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