



HEALTHY BOWEL – A guide to a healthy diet and dietary fibre

To maintain or achieve a healthy bowel it is important to eat meals regularly to boost metabolism. Food choices are important in the maintenance of a healthy bowel and the prevention or management of constipation.

A healthy metabolism will promote a healthy weight, overall health and wellbeing. Eating breakfast everyday will boost your metabolism and aid overall health of your digestive system.

The bowel needs fibre to assist with production of a healthy stool / poo and to stimulate a bowel movement.

Fibre rich foods include:

- **Wholegrain** breakfast cereals, wholewheat pasta, wholegrain bread and oats, barley and rye
- **Fruit** such as berries, pears, melon and oranges
- **Vegetables** such as broccoli, carrots and sweetcorn
- **Peas, beans and pulses** – add to stews and casseroles
- **Nuts and seeds** - including almonds, hazlenuts, chia and pumpkin seeds
- **Potatoes** with skin on – boiled or baked



To increase your fibre intake you could:

- Choose a **high fibre breakfast** cereal eg wholegrain cereal like wholewheat biscuit cereal, bran flakes or porridge. Try adding some fresh fruit, dried fruit, seeds and/or nuts.
- Go for **wholemeal** or seeded wholegrain breads.
- Choose **wholegrains** like wholewheat pasta, bulgur wheat or brown rice.
- Eat **potatoes with skins on** eg baked potato, wedges or boiled new potatoes – you can eat these hot or use for a salad.
- For **snacks** try fruit, vegetable sticks, rye crackers, oatcakes, unsalted nuts or seeds.
- Include plenty of **vegetables** with meals – either as a side dish/salad or added to sauces, stews or curries – especially green leafy vegetables such as Kale and Spinach
- Add **pulses** like beans, lentils or chickpeas to stews, curries and salads.



Recommended daily intake of dietary fibre

(Based on guidelines published in 2015 by Department of Health)

Age (years)	Recommended intake of fibre
2-5	15g per day
5-11	20g per day
11-16	25g per day
17 and over	30g per day

Examples of fibre content in food:

Meal	Food	Quantity	Fibre content (g)
Breakfast	Bran flakes	40g	8
	1 banana, sliced	100g	1.5
Snack	Apple	100g	2.4
Lunch	Baked beans	150g	6.8
	wholemeal toast (2 slices)	70g	4.7
Dinner	Baked potato with skin, tuna mayonnaise	180g	6.5
	Salad (lettuce, tomato and cucumber)	138g	1.7
	Low fat yogurt	150g	0
	with strawberries and chopped almonds	100g 13g	1.5 1.3
Total fibre intake			34.4g

Look on food packaging for further guidance on fibre content

Other advice:

- It is important to include all food groups in all meals – **protein, carbohydrates and fats**
- Drink between **1.5 – 2 litres of fluid** a day, water based fluids are most healthy eg cordial, water
- If **increasing fibre content** it is important to increase your fluid intake to aid passage of fibre through the bowel

If you have any concerns about your bowels, including an altered bowel habit, please consult with your GP

If you would like further information please contact Bladder & Bowel UK National Helpline on 0161 214 4591 for a confidential and discreet discussion or email bbuk@disabledliving.co.uk



References

Dietary fibre 2018 – British Nutrition Foundation –
www.nutrition.org.uk/healthyliving