



Fibre

What is fibre?

Fibre is a type of carbohydrate naturally present in plant foods like whole grains, pulses (peas, lentils and beans), vegetables, fruit, nuts and seeds.



Fibre is an important source of fuel for our gut

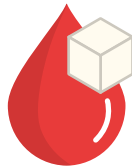
Our bodies lack the enzymes required to breakdown and digest fibre, so it travels to our lower intestines where health promoting microbes live. These microbes have the necessary enzymes required to breakdown this fibre and they use it to make important chemicals which help to keep us healthy.

Fibre is fermented by our gut to make important chemicals which help to:

Trigger the release of hormones which help regulate appetite.



Stabilise blood glucose levels.



Maintain the gut barrier which is important for protecting against viruses and infections.



Build a strong and regulated immune system.



Regulate inflammation which is important for good health.



Influence the production of neurotransmitters required for brain health, including those which help to regulate mood, sleep and feelings of stress, anxiety and fear.



Diets rich in fibre are linked with:

- Improved appetite regulation
- Improved glucose and insulin regulation
- Improved weight regulation
- Reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and cancer
- Reduced all-cause mortality

Eating more fibre from **unprocessed or minimally processed** plant based foods appears to be protective against disease. These foods retain their fibre structure and nutrients. They are digested more slowly and have greater nutrient quality than ultra processed foods.



How much fibre do I need?

The recommended intake of fibre is a minimum of 30g per day. Most people in the UK consume a lot less than this. High intakes of fibre from plant based sources are associated with improved health, i.e. the more fibre the better.

Which foods contain fibre?

Whole grains, pulses (lentils, peas and beans), vegetables, whole fruit, nuts and seeds are all excellent sources of fibre. Eating a diverse range of these plant based foods is important and increasing evidence suggests eating them unprocessed or minimally processed appears to be of greater benefit to our health.

Fibre content per 100g



Cooked lentils 8g



Cooked chickpeas 8g



Pumpkin seeds 18g



Oats 10g



Broccoli 3g



Mixed nuts 10g



Apple 4g



Berries 5g



Linseeds 25g

How do I include more fibre?

- Introduce fibre containing foods slowly, and chew your foods well as this will help lessen any gut symptoms.
- Add more pulses to meals, for example, add chickpeas or butter beans to salads, curries and casseroles. Use tinned or frozen pulses, which can be eaten as they are or simply reheated. Lentils are really low cost, they don't require any soaking and they are often a little easier to digest. They can be used to make a tasty Dahl to accompany your meal.
- Choose whole grains, for example, oats, brown rice, bulgur wheat, quinoa and buckwheat. The less processed the whole grain the greater the benefit.
- Include more vegetables and whole fruit with meals, tinned or frozen sweetcorn, peas and berries are low cost and can be eaten simply as they are or reheated.
- Add more nuts and seeds to meals, these are an excellent source of fibre and a healthier source of fat. Red skin peanuts are really low cost. They can also be toasted with herbs and spices for a crunchy food topper or snack.

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