



## Fiber and Nutrition

Fiber is a general term referring to complex carbohydrates that your body cannot digest or absorb into your bloodstream. Fiber is excreted rather than used for energy like other carbohydrates. Fiber is classified as either soluble or insoluble and both contribute to weight management and blood glucose control.

Insoluble Fiber is important because it pushes waste through the intestines. Because of its role in the body, insoluble fiber is often called roughage, and has been shown to reduce the risk of colon cancer and diverticulitis. Insoluble fibers include: wheat, corn, bran, all whole grains and vegetables.

Soluble fibers dissolve and become gummy in the intestines. These fibers bind to fatty substances and promote their excretion as waste; a mechanism which seems to help lower blood cholesterol. Soluble fibers also prolong the stomach emptying time so that sugar is released more slowly, which is extra important if you have diabetes. Soluble fibers include: fruits, oats, barley and legumes.

The recommendation for Americans is to consume between 25-35 grams of total fiber (soluble and insoluble) per day. Variety is the key. Choose a balanced diet following the food guide pyramid, 5 servings of fruits and vegetables and 6-11 bread servings. This will supply the recommended amount of fiber and carbohydrate. Make sure to increase your fiber intake slowly as it may result in an upset stomach, cramps and bloating. Make sure you increase your water intake as well.