



NUTRITION NOTES

FABULOUS FIBRE!

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Fibre is an important part of a healthy diet, yet many people still don't consume the recommended amount each day. A diet rich in fibre has many health benefits and pulses can play a key role in increasing the fibre content of your diet!

What is it? Dietary fibre is a complex carbohydrate found in foods of plant origin that our bodies do not fully breakdown or digest. It is often referred to as roughage or bulk and instead of being fully digested, it passes through our gastrointestinal system and out of our bodies relatively intact.

Fibre is classified into soluble or insoluble fibre. Soluble fibre dissolves in water to form a gel-like mush and is found in oats, barley, pulses, psyllium, and some fruits and vegetables. Insoluble fibre does not dissolve in water; it promotes the movement of material through our gastrointestinal tract and increases the bulk of our stools. Sources of insoluble fibre include whole wheat flour, wheat bran, nuts, brown rice, fruit and vegetables.

There are many health benefits of a high fibre diet. These include maintaining bowel health; reducing constipation; lowering the risk of developing hemorrhoids and diverticular disease; promoting heart health; improving blood sugar control in diabetes; and helping with weight management.

How much fibre do we need each day? The chart below shows the recommended amount of fibre based on age and gender. It's interesting to note that we need fibre at every age and stage of life!

AGE (YEARS)	FEMALE (G/DAY)	MALE (G/DAY)
1-3	19	19
4-8	25	25
9-13	26	31
14-18	26	38
19-50	25	38
51+	21	30
Pregnant	28	
Breastfeeding	29	

Focus on Fibre, 2018, unlockfood.ca

Where do pulses fit in? Pulses are a significant source of fibre (see chart below). One cup of cooked pulses provides one-third to more than half the amount of fibre we need each day!

PULSE	FIBRE IN 1 CUP COOKED (200 G)
Pinto Beans	18.0 g
Great Northern Beans	14.0 g
Black Beans	14.0 g
Dark Red Kidney Beans	13.2 g
Chickpeas	9.2 g
Lentils	8.4 g
Split Peas	5.8 g

The Canadian Nutrient File, version 2015, Government of Canada

Boosting Your Fibre Intake

Incorporating cooked pulses into your meals and snacks will increase your fibre intake. Try adding:

- 2 Tbsp white beans or lentils to smoothies
- 1/3 cup black or white beans to omelettes
- 1/2 cup lentils to ready made/canned soups
- 1/2 to 1 cup chickpeas to salads
- 1/2 cup mashed white beans to chicken, tuna or egg salad sandwich fillings
- A handful of black beans to your usual pizza toppings, quesadillas, wraps or salsa
- Pureed lentils to pizza sauce or pasta sauce
- Hummus and bean dips as snacks with fresh vegetables and pita chips

Switching from refined grains to whole grains can add a ton of fibre to your diet. Aim to eat at least half of all your grains as whole grains. The chart below shows how some simple substitutions can really boost your fibre intake, like switching from white bread to whole wheat bread, white rice to brown rice, regular pasta to whole wheat pasta or substituting whole wheat flour or chickpea flour for half of the white flour in your baking.

PORTION	FOOD ITEM	FIBRE	HIGHER FIBRE ALTERNATIVE	FIBRE	INCREASE IN FIBRE
1 slice	White Bread	0.8 g	Whole Wheat Bread	2.4 g	+1.6 g (+200%)
1 whole	English Muffin	1.5 g	Whole Wheat English Muffin	2.6 g	+1.1 g (+73%)
1 whole	White Pita Bread	1.3 g	Whole Wheat Pita Bread	4.7 g	+3.4 g (+262%)
1/2 cup cooked	White Rice	0.4 g	Brown Rice	1.5 g	+1.1 g (+275%)
1 cup cooked	Spaghetti	2.5 g	Whole Wheat Spaghetti	4.8 g	+2.3 g (+92%)
1/2 cup	White All-Purpose Flour	2.0 g	Whole Wheat All-Purpose Flour	7.7 g	+5.7 g (+285%)
4	Soda Crackers	0.4 g	Whole Wheat Soda Crackers	1.7 g	+1.3 g (+325%)
1 cup	Corn Flakes Cereal	0.7 g	Bran Flakes Cereal	7.4 g	+6.7 g (+957%)

Nutrient Values of Some Common Foods, 2016, Government of Canada.

Including more fruits and vegetables will boost your fibre content as well. It is also recommended to drink plenty of water and gradually increase the fibre content of your diet over time. This will allow your digestive system to adjust; adding too much fibre at once can lead to abdominal bloating and intestinal gas.

Turn the page for our Keen for the Bean Smoothies recipe that include white beans for a boost of fibre and plant protein. Check out our website www.albertapulse.com for more great recipes to add fibre to your diet!

Do you have a question about pulse nutrition? You can contact me at dmclennan@albertapulse.com or (780) 986-9398 ext. 109.

References:

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