

# Micronutrients: Fibre

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## Key points:

- Fibre is the indigestible part of plant foods.
- Dietary fibre is important for our digestive health and regular bowel movements.
- Fibre helps you feel fuller for longer, can improve cholesterol and blood sugar levels and reduce your risk of diseases, including bowel cancer.
- Most Australian's don't consume enough fibre.
- Eating a variety of plant foods will help you get enough fibre each day.
- Increase your fibre intake slowly to avoid digestive upset and drinks lots of water.

## What is fibre?

Fibre is the indigestible parts of plant foods, such as vegetables, fruits, grains, nuts, seeds and legumes. Fibre contributes to our digestive health, which can impact our immune system, mental health, disease risk and overall health in so many ways.

There are two different types of fibre which have different functions and health benefits.

**Soluble fibre** helps to slow the emptying process in our stomachs, which helps you feel fuller. It also helps to lower cholesterol and stabilise your blood glucose levels.

Soluble fibre is found in plant foods such as fruits, vegetables, oats, barley and legumes.

**Insoluble fibre** absorbs water to help soften the contents of our bowels and support regular bowel movements. It also helps us feel fuller and keeps the bowel environment healthy.

Insoluble fibre is found in wholegrain breads and cereals, nuts, seeds, wheat bran and the skin of fruit and vegetables.

## What is resistant starch?

**Resistant starch** acts in a similar way to fibre. Resistant starch is not digested in the small intestine and instead proceeds to the large intestine where it ferments and can assist in the production of good bacteria to support bowel health.

Resistant starch is found in undercooked pasta, under ripe bananas, cooked and cooled potato and rice.

## Why is fibre important?

Dietary fibre is important for our digestive health and regular bowel movements.

Fibre also helps you feel fuller for longer, can improve cholesterol and blood sugar levels and can assist in preventing some diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and bowel cancer.

- Fibre is the part of plant foods your body can't digest.
- Plant foods include grains, fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts and seeds.
- There are two types of fibre: soluble fibre and insoluble fibre and resistant starch.
- Dietary fibre is important for digestive health and may reduce your risk of disease.

### Remember:

- Fibre is the part of plant foods your body can't digest.
- Plant foods include grains, fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts and seeds.
- There are two types of fibre: soluble fibre and insoluble fibre and resistant starch.
- Dietary fibre is important for digestive health and may reduce your risk of disease.

## How much fibre do I need?

Gender (over 18 years)	Acceptable intake
Males	30g per day
Females	25g per day

Eating a variety of plant foods will help you get enough fibre each day.

This includes:

- Choosing wholegrain, wholemeal and/or high fibre varieties of grain-based foods like bread and pasta.
- Enjoying a variety of wholegrains, such as rice, oats, quinoa, barley, millet, polenta and buckwheat.
- Eating two pieces of fruit and five servings of vegetables each day.

You can also boost your fibre intake with:

- a sprinkle of bran or psyllium husk on cereal, muesli or yoghurt
- a small handful of nuts and seeds as a snack
- adding legumes to meals

Increase your fibre intake slowly to avoid digestive upset and drinks lots of water.

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## Which foods are high in fibre?

Food	Serving size	Fibre content
Wholemeal pasta	1 cup	7.9g
Carrot (unpeeled)	1 cup	6.9g
Kidney beans	100g	6.5g
Corn	1 medium cob	5.9g
Rolled oats	1/2 cup	4.5g
Wholemeal biscuit	2 biscuits	4.2g
Broccoli (unpeeled)	1 cup	3.8g
Lentils	100g	3.7g
Sweet potato (unpeeled)	1 cup	3.7g
Brown rice	1 cup	2.7g
Almond	30g (25 almonds)	3.0g
Dried apricot	30g (5 dried apricots)	2.5g
Wholegrain bread	1 slice	2.4g
Banana	1 medium	2.3g
Apple	1 medium	2.2g
Psyllium husk	1 tablespoon	2.2g
Popcorn (air popped)	1 cup	1.2g

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