



**Royal Surrey  
County Hospital**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# High Fibre Diet

**Nutrition & Dietetics Department**

**Patient information leaflet**

## What is fibre?

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Dietary fibre (also known as roughage) is the part of plants that cannot be easily digested. Some of it passes through the body without being absorbed. Fibre absorbs fluid as it moves through your bowel. This adds weight to your stools and forms a soft bulk. This makes it easier for you to go to the toilet.

Many people in the UK do not eat enough fibre. Increasing the amount of fibre in your diet may help to reduce:

- constipation
- haemorrhoids (piles)
- symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome (ibs)
- the risk of developing diverticular disease
- cholesterol levels and risk of coronary heart disease
- the risk of bowel cancer

## Who is this leaflet for?

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This leaflet is for you if you:

- suffer from constipation
- suffer from haemorrhoids (piles)
- have been diagnosed with diverticular disease (but are not having a flare up)
- have high cholesterol
- have a family history of bowel cancer

## How do I introduce more fibre into my diet?

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- Aim to increase the fibre in your diet gradually (over several weeks). You may have more 'wind' and bloating than usual to start with. This should settle down as your body gets used to the extra fibre.
- Try to add one extra fibrous food into your diet each day.
- You may find you suffer with ongoing wind or bloating. If this happens, you should reduce the amount of high fibre food for a week or so until your symptoms settle. Then start to increase the fibre again by adding one food at a time.
- Fibre absorbs fluid as it passes through the body. It is therefore important to drink plenty throughout the day to prevent constipation. Aim for 8-10 glasses every day. This is equal to 2 litres (4 pints) of fluid e.g. tea, coffee, fruit juice, milk, squash, water.
- Try to avoid processed and pre-prepared foods. These have a lower fibre content than fresh alternatives.
- Aim for at least 5 portions of fruit and/or vegetables every day. Choose a variety of colours and spread them throughout the day. Dried fruit counts as one of your '5-a-day' and is very high in fibre.

## How much fibre do I need to eat every day?

It is recommended that healthy adults have 30g fibre each day. Use the table below to calculate your daily intake, and to increase it if necessary.

Food	Portion size	Fibre content (g)
<b>Fruit</b>		
Banana	1 medium (100g)	2.0
Orange	1 medium (100g)	2.5
Apple (with skin)	1 medium (100g)	2.0
Pear (with skin)	1 medium (150g)	2.5
Strawberry	5 fruits (60g)	0.5
Raspberry	20 fruits (80g)	4.0
Raisins	1 tablespoon (30g)	0.5
Dried apricots	5 fruits (40g)	3.0
<b>Vegetables</b>		
Carrots (cooked)	3 tablespoons (60g)	1.5
Broccoli (cooked)	3 tablespoons (85g)	2.0
Cauliflower (cooked)	3 tablespoons (90g)	1.5
Green beans (cooked)	3 tablespoons (90g)	3.5
Courgette	Half (medium)	1.0
Spinach	3 tablespoons	3.0
Sweetcorn	3 tablespoons (85g)	2.0
Peas (fresh or frozen)	3 tablespoons (70g)	3.0

Food	Portion size	Fibre content (g)
<b>Salads</b>		
Lettuce	Average serving in salad (30g)	0.5
Tomato	6 cherry tomatoes (90g)	1.0
Peppers (raw)	Half of large pepper (80g)	1.0
Avocado pear	Half of 1 fruit	2.5
<b>Starchy foods</b>		
Bread – wholemeal	1 medium slice (large loaf)	2.0
Bread – brown, granary	1 medium slice (large loaf)	1.5
Bread – white pitta	1 large	2.0
Bread – wholemeal pitta	1 large	4.5
Oat cakes	2 biscuits	1.0
Wholemeal crackers	2 biscuits	1.5
Rye crackers e.g. Ryvita®	2 biscuits	2.5
All-Bran®	Medium bowl (40g)	9.5
Bran Flakes®, Sultana Bran®, Fruit 'n Fibre®	Medium bowl (30g)	4.0
Weetabix®	2 biscuits	4.0
Shredded Wheat®	2 biscuits	4.5
Muesli	Medium bowl (50g)	3.0
Porridge	Medium bowl (40g oats)	3.0
Jacket potato	1 medium (with skin)	5.0
Potato (boiled with skin)	1 medium	3.0
Pasta – white (cooked)	Medium portion (220g)	4.0
Pasta – brown (cooked)	Medium portion (220g)	8.0
Rice – white (boiled)	3 tablespoons (180g)	0.5
Rice – brown (boiled)	3 tablespoons (180g)	1.0

Food	Portion size	Fibre content (g)
Pulses and nuts		
Quinoa (cooked)	Medium portion (100g)	2.8
Baked beans	1 small can (205g)	7.6
Lentils	1 heaped tablespoon	1.5
Chickpeas	1 heaped tablespoon	1.5
Red kidney beans	1 heaped tablespoon	2.0
Nuts	2 tablespoons	1.0
Seeds (pumpkin, sunflower)	1 dessertspoon	1.0
Golden linseeds	2 tablespoons (15g)	4.0

## What should I eat for breakfast?

- Cereals containing wheat, oats or bran e.g. Weetabix®, Branflakes®, Shreddies®, Shredded Wheat®, granola
- Porridge
- Chopped fresh or dried fruit added to your cereal or porridge
- Cereals that contain dried fruit or nuts e.g. Fruit 'n Fibre®, muesli
- Wholemeal, wholegrain or seeded/granary bread instead of white or 'brown'
- Wholemeal/granary toast with
  - crunchy peanut butter
  - marmalade with peel
  - grilled tomatoes
  - mushrooms
- Natural yoghurt with fresh fruit, nuts and/or seeds
- Piece of fruit
- Small glass of fruit juice (with bits for extra fibre)

## How can I add fibre to my main meal?

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- Include two portions of vegetables or a large salad with your main meal every day
- Add extra vegetables, lentils or pulses to casseroles, stews or minced meat
- Swap some meat for beans, lentils and pulses
- Use wholewheat pasta or brown rice instead of white
- Opt for stir fries which contain lots of vegetables
- Add extra toppings to ready made pizzas e.g. sweetcorn, peppers, mushrooms, artichokes
- Choose vegetarian alternatives e.g. vegetable curries, lasagne
- Add vegetables to macaroni cheese and pasta dishes e.g. spinach, sweetcorn, butternut squash
- Opt for tomato based pasta sauces made with extra vegetables and serve with a side salad
- Add sunflower and pumpkin seeds to salads

## What should I eat for a snack meal?

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- Soup with a wholemeal/wholegrain roll. Lentil or vegetable soup options are ideal
- Wholemeal or granary toast with
  - baked beans
  - grilled tomatoes
  - mushrooms
- Baked potato (including skin) with
  - baked beans
  - cheese and tomato
  - tuna and sweetcorn
  - chilli con-carne
  - coleslaw
- Sandwiches made with wholemeal or granary bread and
  - tuna and cucumber
  - bacon, lettuce and tomato
  - tuna and sweetcorn
  - egg and watercress
  - cheese and tomato
  - cold meat and lettuce
- Wholemeal pitta with houmous
- High fibre crackers, Ryvita® or oat cakes with cheese, or cold meat and salad
- Salad with cold meat or fish e.g. sliced chicken or turkey breast, smoked mackerel
- Wholewheat pasta, brown rice or quinoa salad



## What should I eat for dessert?

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Fruit is ideal and can be served in many ways:

- Chopped with natural yoghurt
- Cooked or stewed
- Made into a fruit salad
- Added to jelly
- As a crumble made with wholemeal flour and oats
- Made into a fruit flan
- Added to cheesecake
- Included in pavlova

**NB.** If you are trying to lose weight, limit high calorie options and choose the low fat desserts more often.

## What snacks are high in fibre?

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- All fruit: tinned, fresh and dried
- Fruit smoothies
- Cereal bars containing dried fruit, nuts and oats
- Flapjacks
- Wholemeal and wholegrain biscuits e.g. hob nobs, digestives
- Biscuits containing dried fruits e.g. Garibaldi®, fig rolls
- Hot cross buns, tea cakes and fruit scones
- Malt loaf
- Fruit cake
- Nuts and seeds
- Popcorn
- Bombay mix
- Seeded crackers and wholegrain biscuits with dips e.g. salsa, houmous

**NB.** Keep snacks to a minimum if you are trying to lose weight

## Reference sources

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- Gandy J (ed) Manual of Dietetic Practice 5th Edition. 2014 Blackwell Publishing
- British Dietetic Association Food Facts:  
[www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/fibrefoodfactsheet.pdf](http://www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/fibrefoodfactsheet.pdf)
- NHS Choices:  
[www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/1141.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/chq/Pages/1141.aspx)



## Dietetic Department contact details

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If you have any questions about the information in this leaflet please contact the Dietetic Department at the address below:

### **Nutrition & Dietetics Department**

Royal Surrey County Hospital, Egerton Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 7XX.

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## PALS and Advocacy contact details

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Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

**Telephone:** 01483 402757

**Email:** [rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Opening hours:** 9.00am–3.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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Future review date: January 2020

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