

Fiber in Foods

Fiber is a substance in plant foods that can't be broken down by your gut and so it is not used for energy. However, fiber has many beneficial effects on health. For example, it provides bulk to stools and promotes regular bowel movements. Some fiber can also absorb water and make you feel full longer, which can help you manage weight over the long term.

- **Insoluble** fibers tend to be found in wheat, rye, bran, and other grains.
- **Soluble** fibers tend to be found in fruits, oats, barley, and legumes. These fibers are fermented in the gut and can cause gas.

As a general guide, try to get 12 to 14 grams of fiber for every 1,000 calories you eat.

In the initial period after weight-loss surgery, when food intake is limited, it is very difficult to eat enough fiber and you may become constipated. Your health care provider may therefore recommend a fiber supplement. Fiber supplements such as Benefiber dissolve in water and can be used after weight-loss surgery. Always check with your health care team before using these products or any other supplement after weight-loss surgery.

Adding fiber without consuming enough fluid can make constipation worse. Also, adding too much fiber too quickly can cause gas and loose stools.

Food	Grams of Fiber
4 whole wheat crackers	2
1 banana	3
½ cup brown rice	4
1 pear	4
2 slices whole grain bread	4
½ cup peas	5
½ cup raspberries	5
¾ cup high-fiber cereal	5
1 cup broccoli, cauliflower, or carrots	5
1 cup whole wheat cereal	5
1 cup bran cereal	5
1 cup mixed vegetables	8
1 cup chili con carne	9
½ cup cooked beans (e.g., navy beans, kidney beans, black beans, lentils, pinto beans, garbanzos/chickpeas, soybeans)	5–9
1 asian pear	10

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agriculture Research Service. 2009. USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, release 22. <http://www.ars.usda.gov/ba/bhnrc/ndl>. Agricultural foods are from ARS single nutrient reports.