

Managing Constipation with a High Fibre Diet

What is constipation?

- Hard bowel movements (stools) that are difficult to pass
- May cause discomfort, abdominal pain or bloating

What can cause constipation?

- A low fibre diet
- Not enough fluids in our diet
- Lack of physical activity or exercise
- Stress, anxiety, or change in routine
- Side effects from certain medications (like pain medications)
- Laxative overuse

How can my diet help constipation?

Many people with constipation can benefit from a high fibre diet and lots of fluids. High fibre foods help to hold water in the stools, keeping them soft.

What Can You Do to Prevent Constipation?

- **Eat Foods Containing Fibre Every Day**
- **Drink Enough Fluids Daily**
6-8 cups of fluid a day can help prevent constipation. Try drinking a glass of water at medication and meal times. A glass of warm or hot water first thing in the morning also may help.
- **Exercise Regularly**
Your bowels are muscles that need to be exercised. 10 minutes of walking or stretching can help reduce constipation.
- **Keep Regular Bowel Habits**
Do not use laxatives, unless prescribed by a doctor. Over-use of laxatives can cause your bowels to become lazy, which makes constipation worse.

Helpful Hints:

- Aim for 25-35 grams of fibre daily.
- Increase your fibre intake slowly to avoid bloating, gas, or stomach upset.
- It may take a few days before you notice any changes when you first start a high fibre diet.
- Commercial fibre products, like Metamucil™ or Benefibre™ may also be helpful.



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Which Foods are High in Fibre?

To meet your daily fibre needs, replace the lower fibre foods in your diet with some of the higher fibre foods listed in the following chart.

Instead of These Foods...	...Try These Foods Instead
White bread, croissants, dinner rolls	Whole wheat, pumpernickel, dark rye, or multigrain breads. Try baking with whole wheat flour.
Rice Krispies, Corn Flakes, Special K, Corn Pops	<i>All Bran*</i> , <i>Bran Buds*</i> , <i>100% Bran*</i> , Fibre 1*, Shredded Wheat, Bran Flakes, Corn Bran, oatmeal, Red River Cereal or Puffed Wheat. Add raisins, dried fruit, bran, or flax seeds to increase fibre.
Regular macaroni or spaghetti, instant noodles	Whole wheat or fibre-enriched pasta.
White rice, instant rice	Brown rice, wild rice. Try other grains such as bulgur and barley. Add dried peas, beans or lentils to soups or casseroles.
Juices, fruit beverages	Whole fruits and vegetables with the skin. Dried fruits (prunes, dates, raisins, figs, apricots). Prune juice or vegetable juices (eg. tomato, V-8).
Soda crackers, Ritz type crackers, chips, snack foods	Whole wheat crackers, popcorn, nuts.
Chocolate chip or icing type cookies, ice cream, pastry, cakes, pies	Oatmeal cookies, fig newtons, or other cookies with dried fruits. Bake homemade cookies with whole wheat flour. Add figs, dates, prunes, cranberries or raisins.
Meatloaf, hamburger patties or casseroles	Add natural bran or oat bran instead of breadcrumbs. Add grated raw vegetables to salads, casseroles, muffins or loaves.

**Highest fibre content (10 - 12 grams/serving)*

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Fibre Content of Common Foods	Serving Size
Very high sources of fibre – more than 6 grams	
High fibre bran cereal (check the label) Cooked legumes (dried peas, beans, lentils) Dried dates	¾ cup 1 cup 4 large
High sources of fibre – 4 to 6 grams	
Buckwheat (kasha) Oat bran muffin Pear with skin Green peas, lima beans Sweet potatoes Dried figs Prunes Dried apricots Raspberries Whole wheat pasta Cooked barley	1 cup 1 medium 1 medium, ½ cup ½ cup 5 7 8 ½ cup 1 cup 1 cup
A source of fibre – 2 to 4 grams	
Whole wheat or multigrain bread Whole wheat pita bread Brown rice Baked potato with skin Nuts (almonds, walnuts, peanuts) Peanut butter Sesame seeds Most vegetables Orange, banana, kiwi, nectarine, peach Strawberries Apple with skin	1 slice ½ pita 1 cup 1 medium ¼ cup 2 tbsp 2 tbsp ½ cup 1 medium 1 cup 1 medium

Aim for 25-35 grams of fibre everyday!



High Fibre Recipe Ideas

Natural Fibre Mixture

- 1 cup prune juice
- 1 cup apple sauce
- 1 cup natural bran

Mix well and store in refrigerator.

For best results, use ½ cup each day. Drink at least 2 cups of water at this time.

Fibre Fruit Spread

- 1 cup raisins
- 1 cup pitted prunes
- 1 cup dates
- 1 cup natural bran

Soak prunes in 1 cup water overnight. In the morning, drain prunes and keep juice. Place raisins, dates, and prunes in a blender and mix to a pureed consistency. Add water from soaking prunes and bran. Mix well. Refrigerate in a sealed container. Use as a spread on toast, as a dessert, or as a sauce over yogurt or ice cream.

For best results, use 2 Tbsp three times a day. Drink at least one cup of water at each of these times.

Get Up and Go Cookies

- ½ cup margarine
- 1 cup brown sugar (or Splenda)
- ½ cup prune puree (from soaked prunes or use baby food prunes)
- 1 egg (or 2 egg whites)
- 1 cup applesauce
- 2 cups All Bran cereal
- 1½ cups flour (white or whole wheat)
- ½ tsp baking soda
- 1 cup raisins, dried cranberries, dates or nuts

In a large bowl, beat margarine and sugar together. Mix in the egg and stir in the prune puree. Add the applesauce and stir. Add the dry ingredients and stir well (one at a time or all at once). Add raisins or other dried fruit or nuts.

Drop by spoonfuls onto greased cookie sheets. Bake at 350°F for about 15 minutes. Cool for a few minutes and remove from pans. Store in covered containers. (If you use Splenda, store in the refrigerator to prevent cookies from going moldy).

If you want a harder cookie, try adding a bit more flour. If you want a softer cookie, soak the dried fruit in water before adding to the mixture.

Mega-Fibre Muffins

1 cup All Bran or Bran Buds
¾ cup flour
¼ cup sugar
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. cinnamon
¾ cup honey

1 small jar baby food prunes
2 Tbsp. molasses
2 egg whites, slightly beaten
1 cup buttermilk
¼ cup drained crushed pineapple
½ cup raisins

Combine dry ingredients in a large bowl. In a small bowl, mix the honey, prunes, molasses, egg, and buttermilk. Add honey mixture to dry ingredients and mix gently. Stir in pineapple and raisins. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Heat oven to 375°F. Spray a large muffin tin with nonstick cooking spray. Fill each muffin cup three-quarters full. Bake for 22 to 25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool for 5 minutes before removing muffins from muffin tin.



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