



A cooking and nutrition Fact Sheet

August 2010

Fiber

What is fiber & why do we need it?

Fiber is the part of plant foods that are not digested. Eating plenty of fiber-rich foods can:

- help lower your cholesterol.
- control your blood sugar readings, if you have diabetes.
- keep your digestive system running smoothly and prevent constipation and cancer.
- help you feel full after eating.

Tips to Remember:

- Drink lots of fluids to keep fiber moving through your body. Enjoy at least 6 to 8 eight-ounce glasses of fluids per day to avoid constipation. This can be water, juice, coffee, etc.
- Increase your fiber intake slowly over several weeks. This will prevent gas or bloating.
- Start your morning with fiber by having a bowl of whole grain cereal like shredded wheat, bran flakes or oat rings.
- Check the nutrition facts label. Five grams or more of fiber is considered high. Look for whole grain bread with 2 to 3 or more grams of fiber per slice.

How much fiber?

Health experts recommend that adults eat between 20 and 35 grams of fiber daily. They also suggest a balance of soluble and insoluble fibers.

Eat plenty of both types of fiber.

1. Soluble fiber, forms a sticky gel when mixed with liquid and acts as a scrub brush in the digestive system.
 - Eat fruits and vegetables with the edible skin left on. (apples, pears or potatoes.)
 - Plan meals with legumes (dried beans, peas and lentils) several times a week.
 - Eat oatmeal often - as a cereal, or in breads, muffins and desserts.
 - Try more foods with barley - like beef barley soup.
 - Eat fruit and vegetables with seeds, like strawberries and zucchini.
2. Insoluble fiber passes through your digestive tract largely intact and helps lower cholesterol and stabilize blood sugar.
 - Eat brown rice instead of white.
 - Eat whole grain bread instead of white.
 - Snack on popcorn, dried fruits, raw vegetables and nuts.
 - Choose a high-fiber cereal for breakfast.

Black Bean and Corn Salad

Yield: 3 servings • Serving: 1 cup

Salad

- ½ cup chopped onion (about ½ medium)
- ½ cup chopped red or green bell pepper (about ½ medium)
- 1 hot chili pepper, jalapeño or Serrano, seeded and finely chopped (optional)
- 1 cup frozen corn or drained canned corn
- 1- 15 ounce can black beans, drained and rinsed

Dressing

- ¼ cup red wine vinegar or cider vinegar or lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 clove garlic, chopped or ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 2 Tablespoons vegetable oil

1. In a mixing bowl stir together the chopped onion, chopped red or green pepper, the chili pepper, corn and beans.
2. In a jar that has a tight fitting lid add the vinegar, chili powder, garlic, salt, pepper and vegetable oil. Shake until the dressing is evenly mixed.
3. Pour the dressing over the bean mixture and stir to mix evenly. Chill for at least one hour. Serve cold as a side dish or main dish.

☆Caution: When handling hot peppers, the oils can cause burning and skin irritation. You can wear clean kitchen gloves or wash hands thoroughly after preparing. KEEP HANDS AWAY FROM EYES.

Ants/Bugs on a Log

- Celery
- Peanut butter or cream cheese
- Raisins or cereal

1. Wash celery and cut into 3 inch pieces.
2. Fill center with peanut butter or cream cheese. Top with raisins or cereal to create ants.

Bran Muffins

Yield: 24 muffins • Serving: 1 muffin

- 2 eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup oil
- 2 cups buttermilk☆
- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 Tablespoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 3 cups bran flake cereal

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Lightly oil or spray with non-stick spray the cups of 2 muffin tins. (2-12 cup or 4-6 cup muffin tins).
2. In a large bowl, beat eggs, sugar, oil and buttermilk.
3. In a separate bowl, combine flour, baking soda, salt, and cereal. Mix thoroughly.
4. Add dry ingredients to wet ingredients. Mix until just moistened.
5. Fill muffin tins ¾ full with batter.
6. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes. Test for doneness.

☆Tips:

- Buttermilk substitute: Mix 2 cups milk and 2 Tablespoons lemon juice or vinegar. Let stand for 5 minutes.
- Add ½ cup raisins or dates.

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