



How much fiber do I need daily?

The ideal amount of daily fiber intake is 25-35 grams per day. It is important to realize that there are different types of fiber. Fibers can be divided by whether they are broken down by bacteria in the colon and whether they have the ability to absorb and hold on to water.

“Fermentable” fibers like inulin and wheat bran are broken down by bacteria in the colon to produce chemicals, called short chain fatty acids, which can increase how often a person move their bowels. Fermentation also produces gas which can cause problems for some people.

Non- fermentable, gel forming fibers like psyllium or isphagula husk are not broken down by bacteria in the colon and absorb and hold onto water which can help to soften stools that are too hard and make loose or watery stool more formed.

All types of fiber can affect the composition of the bacteria in the colon. This composition of bacteria (microbes) in the colon is called the colon’s “microbiome”. The microbiome may also contribute to the effects of fiber on the function of the small and large intestines (gastrointestinal tract).

How do I add fiber to my diet?

Add fiber to your diet slowly. The bacteria in your stomach and small intestines need time to catch up. Adding too much fiber or adding fiber too quickly may cause gas, bloating, cramps and diarrhea. We recommend adding 5 grams of fiber to your diet every day at 2 week intervals. Initially you will have an increase in gas production however the gas production will decrease over time.

A note on supplements:

Most fiber supplements that are tablets only have 0.5 grams of fiber per tablet. Make sure to read the package for proper dosing. To reach the 25-35 grams goal per day, you may have to take many tablets.

How does caffeine affect my fiber intake?

Caffeine is a diuretic which pulls fluids from your body and excretes it as urine. Caffeine-free fluids allow more water to stay in your body. This allows the colon to absorb the fluid, making your bowel movements soft. For every 1 cup of caffeinated fluids, we recommend that you drink 2 glasses of decaffeinated fluids. You may get constipation if you consume a fiber rich diet without enough caffeine-free fluids.

Examples of caffeine-free fluids:

- Water
- Milk
- Fruit and vegetable juices
- Caffeine-free pop
- Caffeine-free coffee/tea
- Flavored water
- Vitamin water, excluding Tropical Citrus Energy flavor

Commonly used fibers to treat constipation include psyllium seed, synthetic cellulose (methyl cellulose), and calcium polycarbophil. Psyllium and methyl cellulose (and probably calcium polycarbophil) do not increase the production of gas. However, they still may result in the sensation of bloating.

Fiber Products

Brand	Type (serving size)	Amount of Fiber	Price
Acacia Fiber	Powder (1 Tbsp.)	6 g	\$16.99
Benefiber Original (wheat dextrin)	Powder (2 tsp.)	3 g	\$19.87
Citrucel (methylcellulose)	1 Tbsp. Powder	2 g	\$12.00
	Caplets (1)	0.5 g	\$12.00
Equalactin (calcium polycarbophil)	Tablets (8) in divided doses, 2 at a time	0.625 g	\$8.49
FiberChoice (inulin)	Chewable tablets (2)	3 g	\$11.67
FiberCon (calcium polycarbophil)	Caplet (2)	0.5 g	\$13.92
Hydrocil (psyllium)	1 rounded teaspoon	2.4 g	\$18.00
Konsyl (psyllium)	Powder (1 teaspoon)	6 g	\$15.99
Metamucil (psyllium)	Powder (2 rounded Tbsp.) (Gluten-free)	6 g	\$18.10
	Wafers (2)	5 g	\$8.99
	Capsules (5)	2 g	\$12.51
Metamucil Clear & Natural (Fibersure) (inulin)	Powder (1 heaping teaspoon)	5 g	\$9.82
VitaFusion	Fiber Gummies (2 gummies)	5 g	\$13.99

Helpful Hints:

- Try a variety of brands or different forms of the same brand until you find the supplement that works for you.
- Avoid sugar-free supplements that contain artificial sweeteners as these can increase gas and bloating.

Some examples of fiber supplements are found below:**Psyllium**

Psyllium found in fiber supplements is derived from the seeds of the Psyllium plant. The seeds expand and become gel-like when exposed to water in the body and add bulk to the stool to relieve either constipation or diarrhea.

Psyllium is the most commonly found active ingredient in fiber products. Some individuals find it to cause excessive gas and bloating.

Methylcellulose

Methylcellulose found in fiber supplements is a synthetic product derived from cellulose. Methylcellulose is not broken down and digested in the intestines, but rather absorbs water and becomes gel-like to add bulk to the stool. Because methylcellulose does not ferment, it may cause less gas and bloating in some individuals.

Calcium Polycarbophil

Calcium Polycarbophil is a synthetic, bulk-forming fiber. It passes through the intestines undigested and absorbs water to add bulk to the stool, relieving either constipation or diarrhea.

Wheat Dextrin

Wheat Dextrin is a fiber derived from wheat starch. It expands and forms a gelatinous substance when exposed to water thus adding bulk to stool. Wheat

dextrin may cause less gas and bloating than other fiber supplements in some individuals.

Inulin

Inulin is a compound produced by many plants and is composed mainly of fructose. Inulin is a prebiotic and, like other fiber supplements, it adds bulk to the stool to relieve constipation or diarrhea, but it may cause excessive gas and bloating in some individuals.

Acacia Fiber

Acacia Fiber is derived from the gum of the acacia tree. In addition to being a fiber supplement, it is also a prebiotic which promotes the growth of healthy bacteria in the gut for digestion. Acacia fiber adds bulk to the stool and does not cause excessive gas and bloating.

Gluten-free Fiber Supplements

- Citrucel
- Fibercon
- Konsyl
- Metamucil powder and capsules (not wafers)
- Acacia fiber

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