

Low-Fiber Diet

Fiber is a type of **carbohydrate** (a nutrient that gives your body energy) that the body can't digest. Fiber is found in:

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Beans
- Nuts
- Seeds
- Whole grain foods

A low-fiber diet may be recommended to people who need to rest their digestive system (**gastrointestinal tract**). A low-fiber diet can help reduce uncomfortable symptoms in people who have certain conditions, such as:

- **Bowel obstructions** (something blocking the intestines)
- Diarrhea
- **Diverticulitis** (a condition caused by infection or inflammation of small pouches in your digestive system)
- **Gastroparesis** (a condition that slows or stops the movement of food from your stomach to your intestines)
- Recovering from gastrointestinal surgery
- **Slow transit constipation** (a condition where waste moves too slowly through your colon)

Guidelines of the low-fiber diet

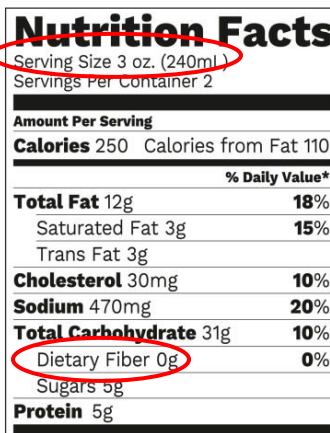
- Pay attention to food labels. Look for foods that have no more than 1-2 grams of fiber in one serving (see the example on the next pages for how to read nutrition labels for fiber).

- Avoid whole grain foods including whole wheat or whole grain breads, cereals, pasta, and brown rice. Instead, buy foods made from refined flours and white rice.
- Avoid whole seeds and nuts, as well as dried fruits like prunes and raisins.
- Follow these guidelines for fruits and vegetables:
 - Peel all fruits and vegetables that can be peeled.
 - Cooking, blending, and juicing are ways to makes fruits and vegetables easier to digest. Cooking and blending fruits and vegetables reduces their particle size, making them easier to pass through the digestive system. Juicing fruits and vegetables removes most of the fiber.
 - Only eat ½ cup of fruit and vegetables per meal or snack (you can eat more if your body tolerates it).

It is important to remember that **fiber tolerance** (how well your body processes fiber without causing you uncomfortable symptoms) is different from person to person. Because of this, you may not have to follow a low-fiber diet long-term. We recommend working with your health care provider to figure out what works best for you and how this can change over time.

How to read a nutrition label for fiber

Look for 1-2 grams per serving.



Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 3 oz. (240ml)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 3g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	

Recommended foods and foods to avoid on a low-fiber diet

Carbohydrates	
Recommended foods:	Foods to avoid:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ White bread, rolls, biscuits, muffins, crackers, plain pita ✓ French toast, pancakes, waffles ✓ Refined cold cereals: puffed rice, puffed wheat, corn flakes ✓ Cooked cereals: farina or cream of wheat, cream of rice, grits, instant oats ✓ White rice and pasta ✓ Cooked potatoes with no skins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Bread products made with whole grain, bran, seeds, nuts, or dried fruit ✗ Whole grain cereals, bran cereals, granola cereals, and cereals with nuts, seeds, shredded coconut, or dried fruit ✗ Whole grains like quinoa, brown rice, and buckwheat ✗ Potatoes with skins

Vegetables	
Recommended foods:	Foods to avoid:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Canned and well-cooked vegetables without skins, hulls or husks. Examples: cooked carrots, green beans, cauliflower, broccoli (florets only, no stalks) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Most raw vegetables ✗ Certain cooked vegetables: peas, brussels sprouts, cabbage, corn, kale ✗ Skins of vegetables (potato, sweet potato, eggplant, cucumber) ✗ Spinach

Vegetables	
Recommended foods:	Foods to avoid:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Peeled (no skins) potatoes, sweet potato, eggplant, and zucchini ✓ Strained vegetable juice ✓ Pureed (blended) vegetable soups. Examples: tomato, butternut squash, vegetable 	

Fruits	
Recommended foods:	Foods to avoid:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Apple sauce ✓ Ripe banana ✓ Ripe melons: cantaloupe, honeydew, watermelon ✓ Canned soft fruits in juice (except for pineapple). Examples: canned peaches, pears, mandarins ✓ Fruit and vegetable pouches (often found in the baby food aisle at the grocery store) ✓ Fruit smoothies (limit fruit serving to 1 cup total and thin out your smooth with your liquid of choice) ✓ Strained fruit juice (no pulp) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Berries ✗ Cherries ✗ Grapes ✗ Kiwi ✗ Pineapple ✗ Pomegranate ✗ Skins of fruits (apples, pears, peaches, plums)

Proteins	
Recommended foods:	Foods to avoid:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Tender, broiled, stewed, or creamed roast beef, lamb, pork, poultry, or fish ✓ Eggs ✓ Silken and firm tofu ✓ Creamy nut and seed butters or nut powders ✓ Hummus or other pureed bean dip (limit to 2 tablespoons per serving) ✓ Protein powder (check the label to make sure there's less than 2 grams of fiber per serving) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Tough meat with gristle ✗ Smoked or cured deli meats ✗ Fried meats, fish, or poultry ✗ Beans and lentils ✗ Whole nuts and seeds

Dairy and plant-based dairy alternatives (soy, oat, almond, cashew, macadamia, etc.)	
Recommended foods:	Foods to avoid:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Milk* ✓ Yogurt* ✓ Cottage cheese* ✓ Ice cream* ✓ Cheese ✓ Sour Cream ✓ Cream Cheese ✓ Oral supplements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Milk and milk products that come with or include whole seeds, nuts, or fruits

Dairy and plant-based dairy alternatives (soy, oat, almond, cashew, macadamia, etc.)	
Recommended foods:	Foods to avoid:
*Choose lactose-free dairy or plant-based options if you are lactose intolerant	

Fats	
Recommended foods:	Foods to avoid:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Vegetable oils: olive oil, canola oil, avocado oil ✓ Butter ✓ Sour cream ✓ Cream cheese ✓ 1-2 slices of avocado (this is equal to about 2 grams of fiber) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Large amounts of avocado (1 avocado has about 10 grams of fiber)

Meeting your nutrient needs on a low fiber diet

It is important to create balanced meals to meet your needs for nutrition. To create a balanced meal, try to combine several food groups together. For example, choose a carbohydrate, a serving of protein, add some fat and ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.

Sample menu:

- Breakfast: White bread toasted with creamy nut butter and 1 banana
- Lunch: Baked chicken breast without the skin or baked firm tofu with a baked potato (no skin), butter and sour cream, ½ cup cooked carrots or pureed vegetable

- Dinner: Soup with crackers and 1 fruit cup
- Snack ideas: Cottage cheese with canned peaches, 2 tablespoons hummus with white pita bread, homemade smoothie, yogurt with sliced banana

More nutrition resources for following a low fiber diet from Michigan Medicine:

For those with gastroparesis, check out this handout on “Gastroparesis Nutrition Therapy”:

med.umich.edu/1libr/Gastro/GastroparesisNutrition.pdf



For those with recent colon surgery, check out this handout on “What Should I Eat After My Colon Surgery?”:

med.umich.edu/1libr/Surgery/GenSurgery/ColorectalSurgery/ColonSurgeryDiet.pdf



To learn more about how to make fiber-containing foods easier to tolerate, you can check out this video on “Foods to Support Gut Health”:

youtube.com/watch?v=8f8ah3sRAnA&list=PLNxqP-XbH8BLKM9_nPdxM8UJM9B4AX7K1&index=11



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