

Let's Talk...

Fibre

LET'S
TALK
gUTS

Fibre is vital for your gut health. It can help to improve constipation and people who consume more fibre are less prone to conditions like heart disease, Type 2 diabetes and bowel cancer. Sounds serious, right? It is. People who eat more fibre often live longer than those who have less fibre in their diet.

Are we getting enough fibre?

In the UK, most of us aren't getting nearly enough fibre. The recommended fibre intake is 30g a day for adults, but on average, adults in the UK are only consuming around 16g a day. That means most of us are missing out on just under a half of our daily target!

Fibre is an important part of a healthy diet, but increasing your fibre intake should be done carefully. Going from zero to 100 can leave you experiencing digestive symptoms such as constipation or diarrhoea.

Get to grips with fibre and try our top tips in this handy resource for boosting your fibre intake.



Please note, this information is intended to provide general health and lifestyle guidance only. If you live with a digestive condition and need tailored information and support about diet and fibre, please speak to your healthcare team or a gastroenterology dietitian.

gUTS
UK!

What is fibre?

Fibre is the part of plant foods like fruits, vegetables, grains, beans, nuts and seeds that you do not digest. It ends up in your large bowel, where it's broken down by gut bacteria. Your large bowel is home to trillions of microbes, known as your gut microbiome. Think of fibre as the ultimate multitasker for this system.

Different types of fibre behave in different ways:

Soluble fibre

This is found in oats, barley, root vegetables, apples and bananas. It acts like a sponge, drawing water into the gut. This softens your poo and makes it easier to pass. It also acts as a prebiotic, providing a feast for your beneficial gut bacteria. In exchange, they produce essential vitamins and short-chain fatty acids that nourish the cells lining your bowel.

Insoluble fibre

This is found in wholegrain bread, cereal, nuts, seeds and potatoes with their skins on. It acts like nature's broom and passes through the gut relatively intact. Also, it adds bulk and speeds up the transit time of food and waste products.

A gutsy tip: Let's talk lunches!

Did you know a single jacket potato with its skin on, paired with a portion of baked beans, gives you a massive 13.3g of fibre? That's nearly half of your daily adult target in just one, simple, delicious meal!



Good to know: Fibre can make your poo bigger, softer and looser. It's normal to see changes to your poo if you increase your fibre intake. It's important to discuss any persistent changes with your doctor.

Five top tips for increasing your fibre intake:

1. Make simple, wholegrain swaps

Trade white bread, pasta, or rice for their wholegrain equivalents. Choosing wholemeal bread or brown rice is an effortless way to instantly bump up the fibre content of your regular meals.

2. Keep the skin on

When preparing vegetables like potatoes, carrots, or parsnips, give them a scrub instead of peeling them. The skins are packed with insoluble fibre and hold a lot of the vegetable's nutritional power.

3. Power up your morning

Start the day with a fibre-rich breakfast. Incorporate oats into your routine with porridge or overnight oats, or choose wholegrain breakfast cereals, and top them with a handful of nuts, seeds or berries.

4. Lean on beans and pulses

Supercharge your curries, stews, soups and salads by mixing in lentils, chickpeas, or kidney beans. You can use them to substitute a portion of meat, which increases your fibre intake while keeping your protein levels up.

5. Drink plenty of fluids

Fibre needs water to do its job properly! As you gradually increase your fibre intake over a few days, make sure you are drinking around eight to ten cups (about two litres) of water or fluid a day. This helps everything move smoothly through your digestive system.



Want to learn more?

We provide information and support on more than 40 digestive conditions and symptoms, as well as health and lifestyle. Go to gutscharity.org.uk/information to discover more.

