

Recommendations

School Food Authorities should offer meals with at least one gram of fiber per 100 calories.

Foundations

Most Americans eat only half of the recommended amount of dietary fiber each day. The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs) recommend dietary fiber intake at 14 grams per 1,000 calories, or 1.4 grams per 100 calories. The fiber nutrition requirement is helping schools work toward the DGAs recommendation.

What is Fiber?

Fiber is that part of plant food that is indigestible by humans. Fiber aids in digestion, promotes health and offers protection from some diseases.

Fiber, also known as nature's scrub brush, is a key nutrient in maintaining health. Unlike other food components, fiber passes through the digestive system without being broken down and absorbed into the bloodstream. Besides helping the digestive system process foods, fiber helps to prevent diseases such as cancer, heart disease, high cholesterol, and diabetes.

FIBER



Fiber comes from plant sources of foods including fruits, vegetables, legumes, grains, nuts, and seeds. The DGAs recommend that most fruits and vegetables should be consumed in whole forms, which are better sources of fiber than fruit and vegetable juices.

The amount of fiber varies among different varieties of foods. The list below provides some examples of high-fiber foods:

- 1/2 cup beans: 5–9 grams fiber
- 1/2 cup lentils: 7.8 grams fiber
- 1/2 cup green peas: 4.4 grams fiber
- 1 cup canned peas: 4 grams fiber
- medium baked potato: 3.8 grams fiber
- medium apple: 3.3 grams fiber
- medium orange: 3.1 grams fiber



Using USDA Foods

USDA Foods offers a variety of fiber-rich foods like canned dry beans (including pinto, refried and kidney beans), whole grains, and canned, fresh, or frozen fruits and vegetables.

Recipe Ideas

- Substitute just over half of the flour in your menus for whole wheat flour.
- Make whole-wheat rolls to use for hoagie buns, or substitute whole-wheat pasta in your spaghetti recipe.
- Add some barley or beans into your vegetable soups.
- Go onto the USDA Foods web site for some ideas for commodity recipes at www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/recipes/byfdgrps.htm

Menu Tips

- Compare the Nutrition Facts label of foods and choose foods higher in fiber.
- Add whole grains to the menu including tortillas, breads, cereals, buns, bagels, crackers, and pasta.
- Serve brown rice or a mixture of half brown rice and half white rice.
- Serve more fruits, vegetables, and legumes.
- Breakfast is a good time to serve fiber-rich foods such as oatmeal, whole wheat muffins, whole wheat waffles, whole-wheat pancakes, and fiber-rich cereals and bars.
- Provide hummus as a dip for vegetables.