

➤ Action plan

- Take regular exercise
- Drink at least eight glasses of fluid a day
- Eat more fibre, including high fibre cereals, wholegrain bread and rice, and at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day
- Never ignore the urge to go to the toilet
- Try to keep stress to a minimum

Diet (food and fluid):

Exercise:

Relaxation:

Seek medical advice:

- If these measures don't help
- If constipation is associated with severe abdominal pain, vomiting or passing blood or mucus in the motions
- Or if you are concerned in any way

PALS (The Patient Advice and Liaison Service) focuses on improving services for NHS patients. If you have questions, concerns, suggestions or compliments about any NHS service you receive then speak to a member of staff. If you feel that they cannot help you or you still have concerns, then contact **PALS**:

- **Freephone 0800 389 7671**
- E-mail PALS@Wiltshire.nhs.uk or write to PALS Wiltshire NHS Southgate House Devizes Wiltshire SN10 5EQ

This booklet is available in large print, Braille or can be translated into another language on request from the PALS office

HFD 01/11
Rv 01/14

High Fibre Dietary Information



Wiltshire Community Health Services

Nutrition and Dietetic Services

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➤ Why is fibre important?

A diet rich in fibre is important for health. Increasing the fibre in your diet can help prevent constipation and diverticular disease (small pouches in the gut wall which become inflamed and cause abdominal pain).

Constipation

Constipation is one of the most common digestive complaints. It varies greatly between different people, as each person's bowel movements differ.

Most cases of constipation are caused by one or more of the following:

- Lack of **fibre**
- Lack of **fluid**
- Lack of **exercise**
- Ignoring the urge to go to the toilet (defaecate)
- Stress

What is fibre?

Fibre (also known as roughage) is found in plants such as cereals, fruit, vegetables, nuts, seeds, peas and beans.

There are two main types of fibre – soluble and insoluble. A combination of the two types of fibre is important in your diet to help you to pass soft formed stools.

Soluble fibre

This is broken down by bacteria in the gut, forms a gel and increases the bulk of stools. This fibre may also help to reduce the amount of cholesterol in the blood. Examples include; fruit, vegetables, pulses (peas, lentils and beans), oats, barley and seeds.

Sources of Soluble Fibre

Food type	Portion size	Fibre content g
Fruit		
Apricots, dried	6	4
Oranges, Pears	1 medium	3
Apples, Nectarines, Peaches	1 medium	2
Prunes	4	2
Banana, Grapes	Medium	1
Sultanas	2 tablespoons (60g/2oz)	1
Dried dates	2 dates (30g/1oz)	1
Fruit, cooked		
Blackcurrants	Medium portion (150g/5oz)	4
Gooseberries	Medium portion (150g/5oz)	3
Plums, Rhubarb	Medium portion (165g/5½oz)	2
Vegetables		
Jacket potatoes	1 medium	5
French beans, Peas	Medium portion (90g/3oz)	4
Brussel Sprouts	Medium portion (120g/4oz)	3
New potatoes	Medium portion (200g/6½oz)	3
Cauliflower, Sweetcorn	Medium portion (135g/4½oz)	2
Broccoli, Carrots, Spinach	Medium portion (90g/3oz)	2
Tomatoes	1 medium	1
Legumes		
Baked beans	Medium portion (165g/5½oz)	5
Chickpeas, cooked	1 tablespoon (30g/1oz)	1.5
Butter beans, split peas	(30g/1oz)	1.5
Oat products		
Ready Brek	Medium portion (180g/6oz)	2.5
Porridge	Medium portion (165g/5½oz)	1.7
Oatcakes	3	1.4
Oat biscuits	1	0.8

Please note: portion sizes and fibre content are approximate measures.

Sources of Insoluble Fibre

Food type	Portion size	Fibre content g
Breakfast cereals		
All Bran	Medium portion (40g/1½ oz)	10
Shredded Wheat	2 biscuits	6
Bran Flakes	Medium portion (30g/1oz)	4.5
Weetabix	2 biscuits	4.5
Sultana Bran	Medium portion (40g/1½ oz)	4
Muesli, Fruit & Fibre, Shreddies	Medium portion (40g/1½ oz)	3.5
Cornflakes, Special K	Medium portion (30g/1oz)	0.5
Bread		
Wholemeal Pitta bread	1 large	5
Wholemeal bread	2 medium slices	4.2
Wheatgerm bread	2 large slices	4.2
High Fibre White bread	2 large slices	3.6
Granary bread	2 large slices	3.4
Brown bread	2 medium slices	3
Ryvita	2	2.5
White bread	2 medium slices	1.5
Digestives	2	1
Wholemeal crackers	3	1
Pasta & Rice		
Brown spaghetti	Medium portion (220g/7½oz)	8
White spaghetti	Medium portion (220g/7½oz)	3
Pearl Barley, cooked	1 tablespoon (60g/2oz)	1.8
Brown Rice	Medium portion (180g/6oz)	1.5
White Rice	Medium portion (180g/6oz)	0.2
Nuts		
Almonds, Coconut, Hazelnuts, Peanuts	Small bag (30g/1oz)	2
Peanut butter	Thick spread on bread (30g/1oz)	1
Brazil nuts, Walnuts	Approx 9 nuts	1

Insoluble fibre

This is the fibre that the body cannot digest and so it passes through the gut helping other foods and waste products move through the gut more easily. It holds water very effectively and increases stool weight. Examples include wholemeal bread, wholemeal pasta and nuts.

➤ How to increase fibre

Slowly increase the amount of high fibre foods you are eating. Your digestive system may need time to adapt in order to prevent wind and/or bloating.

➤ How much fibre do I need?

In general, adults eat around 12g fibre daily. National guidelines recommend an increase to **18g per day**. Some adults may benefit from a further increase, up to **30g per day**.

Some foods contain both insoluble and soluble fibre.

➤ Fluids

It is important to drink enough liquid on a higher fibre diet. Generally 6 – 8 large glasses or cups of fluid a day is required. This can include water, tea, coffee, fruit/herbal teas, fruit juice and squashes.

➤ Eating a balanced diet

It is important to maintain a good balance of foods in your diet. Include the foods listed below.

You should eat more from the larger sections and less from the smaller sections of the diagram.



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➤ Ideas to increase your fibre intake

- Choose foods labelled 'high fibre'. This means the product contains at least 6g fibre per 100g or at least 3g fibre per 100kcal.
- Eat high fibre breakfast cereals with at least 4-5g fibre a serving.
- Choose wholemeal, granary or other high fibre bread.
- Try including wholemeal pasta and brown rice.
- Change to wholemeal biscuits, crackers and crispbreads.
- Eat 5 servings of fruit and vegetables daily. Fresh, frozen, dried and tinned fruit and vegetables are all good sources of fibre.
- Suitable high fibre snacks include popcorn, nuts, seeds and raisins, dried fruit or wholemeal biscuits.
- Add beans, lentils and peas to your meals. Tinned versions are ready to eat. Examples include kidney beans, baked beans, lentils, chickpeas and butterbeans. These can be added to soups, casseroles, rice and pasta dishes or serve baked beans on wholemeal toast.

You should not use unprocessed bran to increase your fibre intake. It can reduce the absorption of minerals.