

# Fabulous Fiber



Fiber receives a great deal of well-justified attention from nutritional scientists throughout the world. In addition to its impressive known benefits, research is underway to shed light on its possible role in preventing certain types of cancer, heart disease and other ailments too common in Western civilization.

Despite these benefits, few people really understand what fiber is and why it is so important to your health and well being.

Many people think of fiber as "roughage" or bulky material to be eaten in large quantities. In actuality, in its purest form, fiber is a powder and very little pure fiber is required every day. The reason lies in its ability to absorb many times its own weight in water. Thus a small amount creates an effective bulk in your intestines where it acts as an "internal regulator" maintaining a smooth flow of nutrients with proper opportunity for their absorption. Fiber itself is NOT a nutrient. In fact, its definitive characteristic is that it passes through the intestines intact while the nutrients with it may be absorbed into the body.

Another very important misconception shared by most people is that all fiber is pretty much the same. In fact there are a great many different fibers from many different sources with individual characteristics. They all come from one of three natural sources: grain, vegetables, and fruit.

Fibers from grain are classified as "**crude fiber**". Bran is the best known grain fiber, but is by no means the most desirable of this group. Then there are the "**dietary fibers**" which include gums, pectins, hemicelluloses and polysaccharides. These are found primarily in fruits and vegetables, and are quite different from crude fiber. They appear to have **amazing properties**. A recent study noted that guar gum is much more effective for the management of Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) than crude bran fiber is!<sup>1</sup>

For example, apple pectin absorbs many different destructive materials from the intestinal tract. Pectin, in combination with guar, **helps regulate the rate of absorption of nutrients**, especially sugar, spreading it over a longer period of time. The result is a slower rise in blood sugar level, and a less rapid subsequent drop - **a quality very important to diabetics** as well as to those with a tendency toward hypoglycemia. Cholesterol and bile acids are similarly absorbed by fruit and vegetable fiber. This action helps lower your cholesterol level by preventing absorption of cholesterol and fats into the body from the intestines

**It is unwise to try to get all your fiber from one source.** Many people who do indeed need additional fiber rely on bran, largely through ignorance of the variety of fibers nature has blessed us with. Wheat bran tends to accelerate the passage

of food through the intestines. This can interfere with the proper absorption of nutrients which takes place there. Even worse, it contains a lot of phytic acid which binds with, and robs you of calcium, magnesium, essential trace minerals, and metals before they can be absorbed. It is a harsh type of fiber.

As a crude fiber, psyllium seeds have twice the bulking capacity of bran and without its tendency to rob you of essential nutrients. That is why many doctors recommend psyllium based products for ordinary constipation instead of laxatives. **Constipation**, in an otherwise normal person, is an **almost certain indication of inadequate fiber intake** and consequently an improperly functioning gastro-intestinal system.

You should avoid taking laxatives that roar through your system overnight like an internal roto-rooter. You want to use a natural product that maintains a normal intestinal transit time through your body for proper absorption of nutrients from food and also makes elimination regular and easy. Any artificial increase in the transit time through your body defeats the function of your natural internal laboratory where nutritional processing takes place.

While fiber will solve most problems of constipation, it is **equally effective** in **controlling simple diarrhea** because it maintains the proper pace and bulk required for digestive function. We hear a lot of talk about environment and pollution these days. Let's consider our internal environment which affects all our cells and tissues and consequently our health and well-being. Fiber has the ability to scrub out all the convolutions in the intestines so they are clean. It removes toxins and wastes deposited in the intestines from all the complex systems of your organism. Certain fibers have a way of trapping and removing many harmful bacteria in the intestines. From the standpoint of detoxification, **fiber can bind a lot of the toxic agents that are produced in our bodies.**

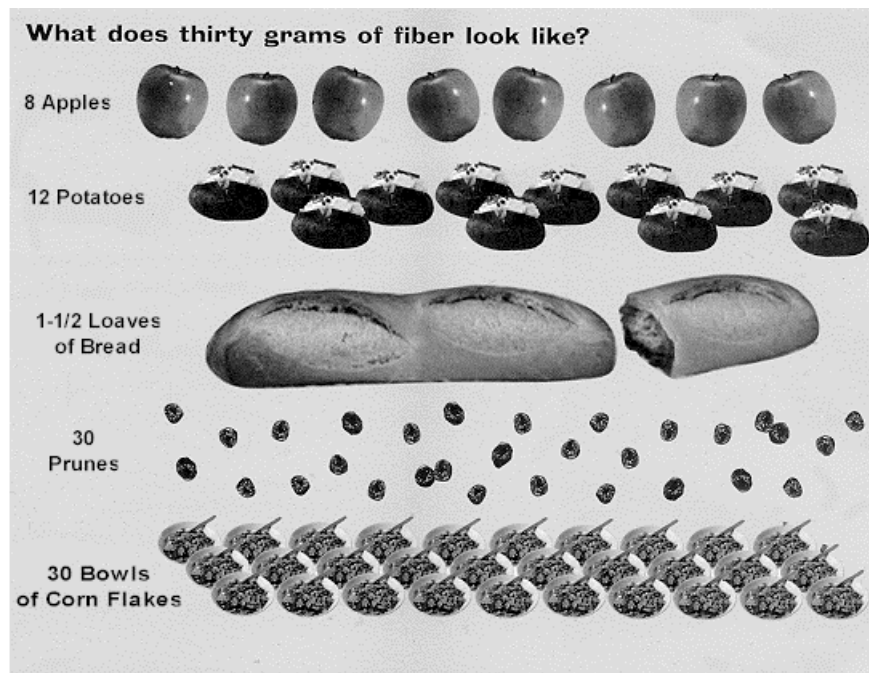
Caloric intake, speed of passage through the intestines, levels of intra-colonic pressure, number and type of fecal bacteria, as well as levels of serum cholesterol and changes in bile-salt metabolism, have all been shown to be related to the amount of dietary fiber consumed. Further, just the filling effect of taking fiber before meals with your supplements means you will want to eat less and, you will start to **lose weight** safely and naturally!

The **American Cancer Society** recommends at least **50 grams of fiber** in our daily diet to decrease the incidence of cancers of the colon, breast, prostate, and others. The **American Diabetes Association** recommends similar quantities of fiber in the diet of diabetics to help manage blood glucose levels. **If we make a concerted effort to eat a high fiber diet, the majority of us average only 10 grams of fiber!** [See Our Food Based Fiber Values Page.](#)

It becomes painstakingly clear that unless we move to a completely vegetarian diet **we need to add fiber supplementation** to our daily supplement list. Let us

help you improve your diet the simple way with **Life Services High Fiber Blend** - a blend of fibers and herbs for optimal intestinal health! **One scoop of High Fiber Blend equals 5 grams of fiber - take this two or three times daily in addition to a high fiber diet - OR....start grazing.....**

## How Hungry Are You?



### References:

1. Parisi GC, Zilli M, Miani MP, et al. High-fiber diet supplementation in patients with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). A multicenter, randomized, open trial comparison between wheat bran diet and partially hydrolyzed guar gum (PHGG). *Digestive Diseases and Sciences* 2002;47:1697-1704.