

# High-Fiber Foods

Fiber is in many kinds of foods, like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. Eating enough fiber may help your child have soft, pain-free, and regular poops (bowel movements).

## What is fiber?

Fiber is the part of plant foods that does not break down or get absorbed when it is eaten. Because foods high in fiber do not break down, they:

- Add bulk (attach to poop and keep it formed)
- Absorb water (keep poop moist, soft, and easier to push out)

## How much fiber does my child need?

How much fiber your child needs depends on their age, sex, and medical conditions.

Use the chart below to estimate how much fiber your child should eat every day. Serving high-fiber foods with most of your child's meals and snacks will help them to reach the total recommended. The numbers by sex are based on sex at birth.

Age	Amount of fiber every day
1 to 3 years old	19 grams (g)
4 to 8 years old	25 g
Males, 9 to 13 years old	31 g
Females, 9-13 years old	26 g
Males, 14-18 years old	38 g
Females, 14-18 years old	26 g

When adding fiber to your child's diet, do so gradually so their body can adjust.

1. Start with this much fiber: Age in years + 5 g per day = \_\_\_\_\_  
For example, if your child is 5 years old, 5 + 5 g of fiber per day = your child should eat 10 grams of fiber per day
2. Increase by 5 grams of fiber per day every week to goal for age listed above **or** until their bowel movements are soft, well-formed, and do not cause pain.

### To Learn More

- Nutrition  
206-987-4758
- Ask your child's healthcare provider
- [seattlechildrens.org/patient-education](http://seattlechildrens.org/patient-education)

### Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line, 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.



For example, week 1 your 5-year-old child should eat 10 grams of fiber every day, week 2 they should eat 15 grams of fiber every day, week 3 they should eat 20 grams of fiber every day, etc.

If your child has gas, bloating, loose stools, or abdominal pain, this could be a sign of too much fiber. Contact your child's doctor or dietitian if this is a concern.

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### How much water does my child need?

When adding high-fiber foods to your child's diet, it is important they drink enough liquids. Fiber absorbs water, which helps make poop soft.

Ask your child's doctor or dietitian how much your child needs to drink each day.

Encourage sips throughout the day. Make drinks fun by using special cups, straws or by adding sparkling water or club soda to make them fizzy. Your child can also get liquids in other forms such as frozen fruit ices, Popsicles, milkshakes, smoothies, soups, and fruit like melon.

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### High-fiber foods

Fiber is in vegetables, fruits, bran, whole grains, beans, lentils, nuts, and seeds. The following foods are high-fiber foods.

1. Check Nutrition Facts food labels for actual grams of fiber per serving. **Look for more than 3 g fiber per serving.**
  2. Find the amount of fiber per serving for specific foods online at: [dietaryguidelines.gov/resources/2020-2025-dietary-guidelines-online-materials/food-sources-select-nutrients/food-0#smallerfiber](https://dietaryguidelines.gov/resources/2020-2025-dietary-guidelines-online-materials/food-sources-select-nutrients/food-0#smallerfiber)
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### Grains, cereals and pastas

- Whole grain crackers, tortillas, rolls, or naan
- Whole wheat pasta, and bread
- Cracked wheat bread
- Cornbread
- Brown rice, red rice, or black rice
- Steel-cut oatmeal or rolled oats
- Millet
- Barley
- Rye bread and crackers
- Popcorn
- Quinoa
- Teff (injera)
- Bran cereals or muffins
- Cereals with 3 or more grams of fiber in each serving like: Fiber One, Bran, Corn Bran Crunch, Cracklin' Oat Bran, Granola, Shredded Wheat, Raisin Nut Bran, Raisin Bran, Grape Nuts, Kashi, or All Bran

## High-Fiber Foods

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### Vegetables

- Artichokes
- Beets
- Peppers and bell peppers
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Carrots and baby carrots
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Corn (canned corn or corn on the cob)
- Green beans, peas, snow peas or snap peas
- Lettuce, spinach, bok choy, or shredded cabbage
- Mushrooms
- Squash
- Tomatoes
- Yams or potatoes baked with skin

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### Fruits

- Apples
- Cantaloupe
- Cherries
- Dried figs, prunes, and dates
- Grapes
- Mango
- Oranges and grapefruits
- Peaches
- Pears
- Pineapple
- Plums
- Raisins, cranberries, and dried cranberries
- Strawberries and other berries
- Juices with pulp

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### Legumes, nuts, and seeds

- Almonds
- Beans or lentils (dried or canned)
- Pistachios
- Split peas
- Cashews
- Walnuts
- Chia seeds
- Pecans
- Flax seeds
- Sunflower seeds
- Pumpkin seeds
- Hazelnuts (filberts)

### Tips for adding fiber

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#### Cook and bake with high-fiber foods

- Try whole grains such as brown rice, bulgur wheat, barley, and whole wheat pasta. Use these in soups or casseroles.
- If children prefer white rice, mix brown and white together.
- Use dried beans, peas and lentils in main dishes, soups, and chili.
- Make homemade soups from dried peas, barley, and lots of vegetables.
- Prepare desserts like cookies, cakes, pies, and bars using dried fruits, nuts, and oats, and use whole wheat flour for 1/2 of the flour.
- Use a whole grain or high-fiber cookbook.

#### Eat high-fiber snacks and lunches

- Use whole wheat bread for sandwiches and add lettuce, spinach, onion, and tomato.
- Cut up raw vegetables for snacking and dipping in ranch dressing, hummus, peanut butter, or any favorite dip.
- Try baked potato skins or baked sweet potato fries.
- Use whole wheat crackers for snacks. Spread them with peanut butter, cream cheese, or other spreads, or serve with cheese.
- Offer whole fruits instead of fruit juice. Cut into easy to hold pieces.

#### Use bran

- Substitute up to 1/2 of the white or wheat flour in recipes with bran flour. For example, use bran flour for 1/2 of the crust and toppings for quiche and desserts such as apple crisp and fruit pies. Use 1/2 bran flour, 1/2 white or wheat flour when coating meat for frying or baking.
- Add 1/2 teaspoon of unprocessed wheat bran to cooked cereal, casseroles, thick soups, stew, or smoothies.
- Soak All Bran cereal in milk and keep in the refrigerator. It can be added to applesauce, other fruits, and yogurt.
- Add up to 3/4 of a cup of 100% bran cereal to each pound of ground beef (or other meat) used for meatloaf, meatballs, and patties. Increase liquid ingredients by 2 or more tablespoons and soften cereal in the liquid for 2 minutes before adding to ground meat.
- Be creative and start with small amounts. Too much bran will make a recipe dry and crumbly, and the bran flavor may be too strong.

#### Healthful high-fiber snack ideas

- Veggies and hummus
- Oatmeal raisin walnut cookies & fruit
- Granola and yogurt with fruit
- Whole grain cereal with milk
- Whole wheat crackers and peanut butter
- Celery stuffed with peanut butter
- Zucchini bread & fruit
- Barley and vegetable soup
- Bean salad

- Popcorn with parmesan cheese
  - Trail mix
  - Bean chili with cornbread
  - Whole grain cereal bars or granola bars and fruit
  - Homemade fruit and/or vegetable smoothies with flaxseed
  - Tortilla chips with guacamole
  - Whole wheat tortilla with peanut butter and banana
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### Recipe for high-fiber apple crisp

#### Ingredients

- 3 large apples, unpeeled, cored and sliced thin
- 1/4 cup raisins (optional)
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup rolled oats (regular or quick)
- 1/2 cup walnuts (optional)
- 3 Tablespoons butter, melted

#### Directions

1. In a large bowl, combine the apples, raisins, sugar, cinnamon and 1 tablespoon of the flour. Stir well to coat the apples with dry ingredients. Transfer mixture to a greased, shallow baking dish.
2. In the same bowl, combine the remaining flour, oats, and nuts. Stir in the melted butter and mix the ingredients well (it should be crumbly). Sprinkle the oat mixture over the fruit mixture.
3. Bake the crisp in a preheated 375-degree oven for 40 minutes or until the crisp is lightly browned. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.

Recipe makes 8 servings with 3 grams of fiber per serving.