

FORAGING FOR FIBRE

More than 60 per cent of people in the Western world lack adequate fibre in their meals, leading to multiple chronic conditions.

Particularly vulnerable to inadequate fibre intake are children, older adults, people trying to lose weight, people who are on a restricted grain diet and those who eat out frequently. On the other hand, people with low rates of chronic disease consume at least 40 to 50 grams of fibre daily.

what is fibre?

Dietary fibre is the indigestible part of plant foods that you cannot get from eating meat and dairy products.

There are several types of fibres in food: soluble, insoluble and resistant starch. All play important and different roles in our wellbeing, so it's important to get a mix by eating a variety of unrefined plant foods. If your plate is mostly covered with steak or refined starchy foods like white bread and white rice, your bowels may not work every day. This is a tell-tale sign that your diet is lacking fibre and health problems are likely to follow.

why you need it every day

Foods that are rich in fibre can help to prevent or better manage many medical conditions such as type 2 diabetes, obesity, high cholesterol and bowel pressure disorders such as

haemorrhoids and diverticular disease. Fibre is also fermented in your colon to produce short-chain fatty acids that help guard your insides from cancer.

Getting enough fibre is more than just adding bran to your cereal. By including unrefined plant foods, you also obtain multiple antioxidants and anti-inflammatory phytonutrients that will fight disease.

five tips for getting enough

- ▶ Base at least three to four main meals a week on beans, peas and lentils.
- ▶ Replace white rice and refined starchy foods with brown rice, wholemeal pasta, barley, bulgur, polenta and other whole grains.
- ▶ Choose high-fibre breakfast cereals and top them with ground linseeds or chia seeds, psyllium and dried fruit.
- ▶ Eat high-fibre breads such as soy and linseed, pumpernickel, whole-grain rye or wholemeal sourdough.
- ▶ Include at least two servings of fruit and five servings of vegetables in your diet every day. Eat the skin wherever possible.



Nutritionist Sue Radd is the award-winning author of *The Breakfast Book* and co-author of *Eat To Live*, internationally acclaimed for showing how savvy eating can combat cancer and heart disease and improve wellbeing. See www.sueradd.com for more nutrition information.