



GETTING GLUTEN-FREE FIBER

Many people on gluten-free diets struggle to get enough dietary fiber. Some even suffer long-term health consequences. Fiber is only found in whole plant foods. There is no fiber in meat, poultry, or fish. Many gluten-free commercial products also lack fiber due to their use of refined ingredients.

why fiber is important

Foods contain a mix of fibers, which have different effects in the body. Soluble fiber helps to lower cholesterol and regulate blood sugar. Insoluble fiber, which dramatically declines in a diet that cuts out wheat and other gluten-containing grain foods, helps to prevent bowel disorders such as constipation, and it protects against colon cancer.

Many health experts recommend that adults consume a minimum of 30 g of fiber per day. Societies that have the lowest occurrence of colon cancer may eat as much as 40–50 g of fiber daily because of their choice of primarily unrefined plant foods.

gluten-free fiber tricks

If health considerations require you to give up gluten, then it's vital that you eat a variety of high-fiber, gluten-free grains and maximize your intake of other gluten-free foods such as legumes, nuts, and vegetables. Here are some suggestions:

- ▶ Try high-fiber, gluten-free breakfast cereals such as muesli topped with ground flaxseed, rice bran, soy grits, or psyllium husks.
- ▶ Prepare brown rice, kasha porridge, millet, or polenta for your main meals. Most of these can be cooked in a rice cooker to save time.
- ▶ Include legumes (beans) at least three times per week as the focus of your main meal. Try bean chili with brown rice, or chickpea and quinoa salad.
- ▶ Round out your meals with colorful vegetables and salads—broccoli, carrots, purple cabbage, etc.
- ▶ Make toast and sandwiches from whole grain, gluten-free breads and wraps.
- ▶ Eat two to three pieces of fresh fruit through the day, including kiwi, oranges, and pears, and eat the skin whenever possible.
- ▶ Nibble on plain nuts, seeds, and dried fruit, but limit yourself to small servings if you're watching your waistline.

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