



Nutrition Roundup

Resolving to Eat Better in 2008? Adding Fiber to Your Diet Helps



One of the most popular New Year's resolutions for people of all ages, shapes and sizes is to eat better. Many people want to lose weight after the holidays – but even those few souls who didn't indulge might want to improve their eating habits in the New Year. Some good news for those who try to improve is that eating better doesn't mean sacrificing good taste. A simple – though not particularly glamorous – way to improve your diet and reduce calories is to add more fiber to your diet.

Eating More Fruit for Fiber

One of the unsung perks of eating fruits and vegetables is the increased health benefits from consuming fiber. Dietary fiber, according to Mayo clinic researchers, is found mainly in fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes — is probably best known for its ability to prevent or relieve constipation. But fiber can provide other health benefits as well, such as lowering your risk of diabetes and heart disease.

The kind of fiber found in fruit is soluble, meaning that it dissolves in the digestive process into a gel-like substance. Soluble fiber has been found to assist in lowering blood cholesterol and glucose levels, as well as prevent constipation and lower the risk of diabetes and heart disease.

In addition to helping prevent disease, a high-fiber diet tends to make a meal feel larger and linger longer, so you stay full for a greater amount of time. Since foods high in fiber provide more bulk per calorie than lower fiber foods, they can help you feel fuller on fewer calories – which may contribute to weight loss!

How much fiber do you need each day? The National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine, which provides science-based advice on matters of medicine and health, gives the following daily recommendations for adults:

	Age 50 and younger	Age 51 and older
Men	38 grams	30 grams
Women	25 grams	21 grams

Source: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/fiber/NU00033>

Fruits such as apples, pears, cherries and peaches can be excellent sources of fiber.

A medium apple with skin contains 4.4 grams of fiber per fruit. A medium pear with skin provides 5.1 grams of fiber per fruit, and one cup of fresh cherries provides 2.9 grams of fiber per serving. One cup of blueberries provides 3.6 grams of fiber. This is in addition to the antioxidants and vitamins that these fruit also provide.

To really boost fiber intake, add fruit to high fiber whole grains such as oatmeal, or other cereal. Eat fruit with lunch to fill up, on fewer calories, and enjoy fresh fruit after dinner as a sinless dessert.



Apples are a great source of dietary fiber. Not only are they great for you, but they leave you feeling fuller on fewer calories!

Recent Research on Fiber

If all of the above benefits of eating more fiber aren't enough, recent research has shown that dietary fiber, both from fruit and cereal sources could boost lung health and may reduce the risk of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), according to a study published in the American Journal of Epidemiology.

In another study, published recently in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, a meta-analysis supports increased fiber in the diet to protect against uterine cancer. According to the study, women who increase their dietary fiber by five grams per 1000 calories consumed may reduce the risk of endometrial cancer by over 20 percent.

Source: American Journal of Epidemiology "Dietary fiber, Lung function and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary disease in the Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities Study", H. Kan, J. Stevens, G. Heiss, K.M. Rose, S.J. London, December 2007.

Source: American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, December 2007, Volume 86, Pages 1730-1737. "Association between dietary fiber and endometrial cancer: a dose-response meta-analysis" E.V. Bandera, L.H. Kushi, D.F. Moore, D.M. Giffkins and M.L. McCullough.

Nutrition Roundup from Stemilt Growers

Fiber and Heart Disease

High intake of dietary fiber has been linked to a lower risk of heart disease in a number of large studies that followed people for many years. In a Harvard study of over 40,000 male health professionals, researchers found that a high total dietary fiber intake was linked to a 40 percent lower risk of coronary heart disease, compared to a low fiber intake.

Fiber intake has also been linked with the metabolic syndrome, a constellation of factors that increases the chances of developing heart disease and diabetes. These factors include high blood pressure, high insulin levels, excess weight (especially around the abdomen), high levels of triglycerides, the body's main fat-carrying particle, and low levels of HDL (good) cholesterol. Several studies suggest that higher intake of fiber may somehow ward off this increasingly common syndrome.

Source: <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/fiber.html>

Apple-Cheddar Panini

This easy-to-make sandwich tastes great and is loaded with fiber!

8 slices whole-grain bread
1/4 cup low-fat honey mustard
2 crisp apples, thinly sliced
8 ounces low-fat Cheddar cheese, thinly sliced
Cooking Spray

Preheat panini press (or non-stick skillet) on medium heat. Lightly spread honey mustard evenly over each slice of bread. Layer apple slices and cheese over 4 slices of bread, using about 1/2 apple and 2 ounces of cheese for each sandwich. Top each with remaining bread slices. Lightly coat panini press with cooking spray. Grill each sandwich for 3 to 5 minutes or until cheese has melted and bread has toasted. Remove from pan and allow to cool slightly before serving.

Servings: 4
Prep Time: 10 Minutes
Total Time: 20 Minutes

Nutritional Information Per Serving:
Calories: 280
Total fat: 6g
Saturated fat: 2.5g
Calories from fat: 190
Protein: 18g
Carbohydrates: 43g
Cholesterol: 10mg
Dietary Fiber: 12g
Sodium: 570mg



Source: U.S. Apple Association

Simple Ways to Add More Fruit to Everyday Eating

If eating baskets of fruit to increase health benefits sounds daunting, try these simple tips for adding more fiber (and flavor!) to the food you already eat. Here are some simple suggestions for maximizing your health:

1. Add chopped fruit to your morning yogurt, or lunch on cottage cheese mixed with fresh peaches or pears. Or if you don't want to bother cutting anything up, keep a package of blueberries in the fridge and sprinkle them in your cereal or add to that yogurt or cottage cheese.
2. Toss chopped fruit (blueberries, peaches, pears, apples, etc.) into almost any combination of vegetables in a salad. Fresh fruit tastes especially good with nuts added to greens.
3. Skip the chips at lunch and munch on crunchy apple slices instead.



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4. For a satisfying and healthy snack, dip apples into peanut butter as is, or mixed with a little honey.
5. Slice fruit onto your sandwich – you'll be surprised at how tasty a ripe pear sliced onto a ham and cheese sandwich can be, and a peanut butter and apple sandwich will make your kids smile for more than just the knowledge of better health!