

Heart-Healthy Eating – SOLUBLE FIBER

What is FIBER? - Fiber, or “roughage,” is a part of plant-based foods (vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, whole grains, legumes) that cannot be completely broken-down during digestion. There are two types of fiber in foods: **soluble and insoluble**. Both play important roles in our health. We should aim to eat more of both types of fiber.

SOLUBLE Fiber – Soluble fiber is especially helpful in lowering LDL (“bad”) cholesterol. Soluble fiber is soft and sticky and absorbs water, forming a “gel-like” substance in the digestive tract. Soluble fiber binds to cholesterol and helps to carry it out of the body, therefore lowering blood cholesterol levels when eaten as part of a healthy diet.

Eat more SOLUBLE Fiber – Aim to eat 10 to 25 grams of **soluble fiber** each day from foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains - especially high fiber cereals and oatmeal, and legumes. Make sure to drink plenty of fluids as you work toward this goal.

*Total fiber intake recommended (both soluble and insoluble) is 21 g to 25 g per day (females) and 25 g to 38 g per day (males).

Ways to Add Soluble Fiber to Your Day -

- Sprinkle oat bran on cereal.
- Eat a handful of nuts or add them to a salad.
- Add beans to soup.
- Mix chia seed or flaxseed into a smoothie.
- Enjoy more whole fruits & vegetables daily.
- Choose whole grain breads and cereals.

Meals on Wheels – A hot, nutritious meal is the basis of the Meals on Wheels Program. Each of our meals meet at least 1/3 of the Daily Recommended Dietary Allowance for the population we serve. Along with a variety of other nutrients, our meals provide a good source of Dietary Fiber. For example, one medium orange has 1.8 grams of fiber, while ½ cup of broccoli has 1.4 grams.

Foods for Lowering Cholesterol:

- **Oats, oatmeal, or oat-based cereal** – Rich in a type of soluble fiber called beta-gluten.
- **Beans** – Beans, lentils, and peas are a potent source of soluble fiber.
- **Nuts** – Aim for 2 ounces of unsalted nuts each day to help lower LDL cholesterol.
- **Fatty Fish** – A lean protein, rich in heart healthy Omega 3's; Aim to eat 2 or more servings per week (4 oz each) of omega-3-fatty acid-rich fish.
- **Plant Sterols and Stanols** – Naturally occurring compounds that help limit the amount of cholesterol the body can absorb. Aim for a total of 2g to 3g per day.

Info. extracted from: Heart-Healthy Eating: Fiber Tips. *Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*. www.eatright.org and Foods to Choose to Lower Your Cholesterol. <https://dhhs.ne.gov>.

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