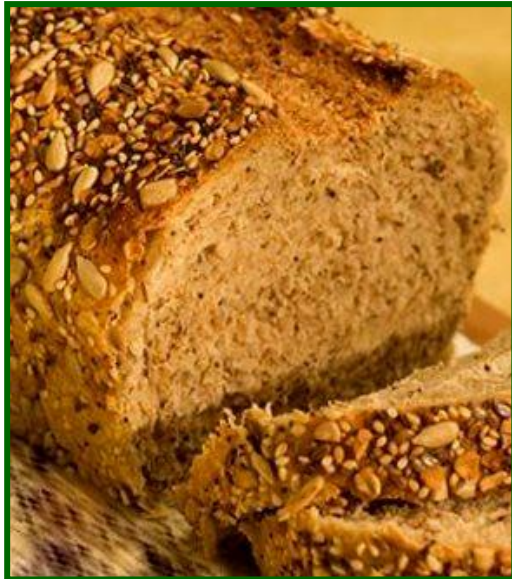


# BULKING UP ON FIBER

## Why Some Like it a Little Rough



Have you been fixating on counting calories or fat grams? New studies prove that whether you're watching your waistline, your blood lipids, or just trying to stay healthy, you had better include a tally of your grams of fiber. How much is enough you ask? When it comes to nutrition, conclusive numbers are usually an invitation for a debate. Here's the scoop; aiming at roughly 25-40 grams /day will place you well in the protective range recommended in most studies.

Now that I've embarked on the quantitative debate, let's look at those numbers. My own client evaluations placed them at 4-12 grams as an average. A typical Mediterranean diet was calculated as containing 15 to 18 grams of soluble fibre whereas the typical North American diet averaged only about 3-4 grams of soluble fibre! Any way you pile it, our diet seems to yield a pathetic volume of the stuff your body loves and leaves.

We can blame all of the numerical fuss on a British missionary surgeon who spent 20 years (from 1946 to 1966) in Africa. Dr. Denis Burkitt observed that his Ugandan patients consumed a hefty 50-250 grams of fiber per day!!! Africans load up on whole grains, root vegetables, legumes (beans), and fresh fruit and vegetables to meet their daily quota to stave off constipation and colon cancer. Several international studies, conducted on the business-end of the fiber transaction (lavatory testing??), keep affirming the link between colon cancer and fiber intake.

Dr. Burkitt was anything but the first to hail fiber as a panacea for all that ails you. Ever wonder how the *Graham* got into the cracker crumbs. When Sylvester Graham, in the 1830's campaigned in favour of getting the "whole" back into the "grains", little did he know that his namesake would end up as a receptacle for rich cheesecake filling! In the 1920's, Will Keith Kellogg would put bran in a box so that his customers could effectively "avoid constipation". So began the boxed cereal craze, fueled by the stagnant bowels of a nation in distress. Wonder how Kellogg would feel about Count Chocula and Fruit Loops!!!

Although fiber contains no nutritional value and no calories, it has been an important human dietary constituent dating back to the cave man. We've come a long way since roots and berries, from Marie Antoinette's cake during the French Revolution all the way to the Oat Bran Revolution in the early 1980's.

Let's have a closer look at why it may be very sensible to bulk up on fiber. Your mamma was right again; so grab a carrot or an apple and read on!

## Getting Yours!

Food	Grams of fiber (per serving)	Food	Grams of fiber (per serving)
Plain bagel, 1/2	0.7	Cheerios, 1/4 cup	2.5
Whole-wheat bread	1.5	Oatmeal, 2/3 cup, ckd.	2.7
Rye bread, 1 slice	1.8	Raisin Bran, 1/2 cup	3.8
Asparagus, 1/2 cup, ckd.	1.8	Brown Rice, 1/2 cup, ckd.	2.3
Broccoli, 1/2 cup, ckd.	2.4	Oat bran, 1/3 cup	4.0
Carrot, 1 large	2.3	Reg. pasta, 1 cup, ckd.	0.6
Potato, med. with skin	1.5	Popcorn (popped), 3 cups	2.0
Spinach, 1/2 cup, ckd.	1.6	Barley, 1/2 cup, ckd.	3.0
Tomato, 1 medium	1.0	White rice, 1/2 cup, ckd.	0.6
Apple, 1 small with skin	2.3	Black beans, 1/2 cup, ckd.	6.1
Banana, 1 small	2.2	Chickpeas, 1/2 cup, ckd.	3.9
Figs, 1/2 dried	2.3	Kidney beans, 1/2 cup, ckd.	6.9
Grapefruit, 1/2 medium	1.4	Lentils, 1/2 cup, ckd.	5.2
Grapes, 15 small with skin	0.6	Navy beans, 1/2 cup, ckd.	6.5
Orange, 1 small	2.9	Peanut butter, 2 Tbs.	2.0
Peach, 1 medium with skin	1.9	Sunflower seeds, 2 Tbs.	1.0
Prunes, 3 medium	1.7	Walnuts, 5 whole	0.8

Check out your box of cereal for a little light reading at the breakfast table tomorrow morning. You will no doubt perk up at the whopping amount of fiber in some popular brands. It's unfortunate that the fiber has to be "added" back to highly refined and devitalized grains. The nutrition panel on the side of the box may carry some impressive numbers from "enriching" these refined grains but makes a clever omission of revealing in plain language the amount of added refined sugar for each serving. I'll place my bet on the real stuff; whole grain cereals, slow-cooking oatmeal, brown rice, and bread which do not need "enriching" as they already contain the "whole" grain.

Fiber can be classified into two types: **water insoluble** and **water soluble**. The insoluble variety we commonly call "roughage" consists mostly of cellulose and hemicellulose found in the husks of whole grains, wheat bran, and the stalks and peels of fruit and vegetables. Soluble fiber is found in oat bran, legumes, psyllium, and some fruits and vegetables. The type of insoluble fiber found in Flax seed, called lignin, is not broken down at all, putting it in class of its' own. Recent research on lignin points to anti-viral, anti-fungal, and anti-cancer properties! Ideally, a combination of the different types of fiber should be included in our daily diet.

Fiber's remarkable power to preserve health and prevent disease will keep this rough stuff headlining Medical and Nutritional Journals for years to come. Varicose veins, hemorrhoids (varicose veins of the rectum), diverticular disease, hiatus hernia, peptic ulcers, colorectal cancer, obesity, elevated "bad" cholesterol, hypoglycemia, and diabetes feature on the list of conditions which can either be prevented and/or treated with optimal use of dietary fiber.

Several theories hold that cancer-causing agents as well as harmful bacteria take hold of the colon before making their way into the blood stream. Fiber gives these disease-causing agents the bum's rush, pardon the potty pun, thereby reducing the population in the bowel.

Throw in a little garlic for its' wonderful anti-viral, anti-microbial, and anti-fungal properties and a little acidophilus-bifidus culture to maintain law and order and you're ready for anything. Just in case I've led you to wonder, the verdict is in on stools; bigger is better! ☒

## A few tasty recipes:

1 cup plain yogurt or soya milk  
1 ripe banana  
1/3 cup dried raisins  
1/2 cup dried pitted prunes  
2 eggs  
1/4 cup cold-pressed sunflower oil  
1 tsp. vanilla  
1/3 cup unsweetened prune juice  
3 tsp. alum-free baking powder  
1 1/2 cup whole wheat pastry flour\*  
1/2 cup oat bran  
1/4 cup wheat germ



1/2 cup quinoa  
1 cup pure water or stock  
2 small onions, chopped  
4 cloves garlic, minced  
2 Tbs. extra-virgin olive oil  
1 stalk celery, chopped  
1 carrot, thinly sliced  
1 red pepper, chopped  
1 cup zucchini, chopped  
2 cups tomatoes with juice, chopped  
1 cup pure water  
1 tsp. chili powder  
2 tsp. ground cumin  
1 tsp. oregano  
pinch of cayenne  
sea salt to taste  
chopped cilantro for garnish

### Prune Bran Muffins

Preheat oven to 350 F. Place yogurt (or soya milk), ripe banana, raisins, prunes, eggs, sunflower oil, vanilla, and prune juice into a blender or food processor. Blend well and pour into a large bowl.

Sift together baking powder, flour, wheat germ, and bran and add to liquids folding in gently with a spatula.

Pour mixture into a greased muffin tin. Bake for about 20 minutes.

\* You may substitute any other flour such as spelt, oat, kamut, rye, or rice flour by itself or in combination for a total amount of 1 1/2 cups.

*Makes 12 muffins*

### Quinoa Stew

Rinse quinoa very well in a fine sieve under running water. Place rinsed quinoa and 1 cup of water or vegetable stock in a medium saucepan. Cover and cook over medium heat until soft, (about 15 minutes). Set aside.

While quinoa is cooking, sauté onions and garlic in olive oil for about 5 minutes. Add celery and carrots, and continue to sauté for about 5 minutes. Add red peppers and zucchini and stir-fry for a few minutes. Add tomatoes and water.

Stir in spices and simmer covered for about 15 minutes until veggies are tender. Stir in cooked quinoa and sea salt and warm through for a few minutes only. Garnish with fresh cilantro and serve.

*Serves 6*

1 cup brown lentils, well rinsed  
 5-6 cups vegetable stock or water  
 ¾ cup diced potatoes  
 1 cup tomatoes, peeled and diced  
 1 medium onion, chopped  
 1 stalk celery, diced  
 1 medium carrot, diced  
 2 cloves garlic, minced  
 1 tsp. cumin seeds  
 1 tsp. ground coriander  
 ¼ cup chopped cilantro  
 Juice of 1 lemon  
 1 tsp. lemon zest  
 sea salt to taste

## Brown Lentil Soup

Combine lentils, stock or water, potatoes, tomatoes, onion, celery, carrot and garlic in a large soup pot. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover and simmer for about 30 minutes.

Add cumin and coriander and simmer for 15 minutes more. Stir in remaining ingredients. Adjust seasonings before serving.



*Serves 6*

½ lb. snow peas, topped & tailed  
 2 bunches of asparagus  
 1 tsp. cold-pressed sesame oil  
 1 tsp. sesame seeds  
 2 tsp. honey  
 ¼ tsp. grated fresh ginger

## Snow Peas & Asparagus

Top and tail snow peas. Peel ends of asparagus with vegetable peeler and slice stalks diagonally. Steam until just tender. Drain and run under cold water. Drop snow peas into a pan of boiling water then drain immediately. Heat sesame oil and sesame seeds in wok. Add snow peas, asparagus, honey and ginger. Stir-fry until heated through.

*Serves 4-6*

1 medium eggplant, cut into 1” cubes  
 2 large onions, sliced  
 3 medium zucchini, cut into ½” slices  
 2 green peppers, cut into ½” pieces  
 3 large tomatoes, sliced  
 1 cup fresh parsley, minced  
 1 Tbs. fresh basil or  
 ½ tsp. dried basil  
 4 cloves garlic, minced  
 ½ tsp. vegetable salt  
 Lemon pepper to taste  
 1 Tbs. Extra-virgin olive oil

## Oven-Baked Ratatouille

Layer vegetables in a deep casserole and sprinkle with parsley, salt, basil, and garlic. Sprinkle with vegetable salt and lemon pepper. Chill overnight.

Pour extra-virgin olive oil over vegetables. Bake covered in a 350 F oven for 1 hour.



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