



Kids Need Fiber: Here's Why and How

Fiber is an important nutrient that most children (and parents) are not getting enough of each day. As parents, you do your best to feed your family healthy foods (</English/ages-stages/gradeschool/nutrition/Pages/Making-Healthy-Food-Choices.aspx>), but you may need help with choosing good sources of fiber.



How Much Fiber Do Children Need?

There are different fiber recommendations for children based on energy needs, age, or weight.

- **Eat 5.** A simple way to make sure your children are getting enough fiber is by making healthful food choices. If your children are eating at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day along with other foods that are good sources of fiber, there is really no need to count fiber grams.
- **Add 5.** If you find it helpful to keep track of numbers, add 5 to your children's age. For example, a 5-year-old would need about 10 grams of fiber each day. **Note:** The total daily recommended amount of up to 25 grams for adults can be used as a general guideline for children.

Why is Fiber Important?

Fiber helps make us full and keeps things moving in the digestive tract. A diet that includes good sources of fiber may help prevent constipation (</English/health-issues/conditions/abdominal/Pages/Constipation.aspx>). These foods also are good sources of nutrients and vitamins (</English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/Where-We-Stand-Vitamins.aspx>) that may help reduce the risk of heart disease (</English/health-issues/conditions/heart/Pages/Heart-Disease.aspx>), certain types of cancer (</English/health-issues/conditions/cancer/Pages/default.aspx>), and obesity (</English/health-issues/conditions/obesity/Pages/default.aspx>).

Good sources of fiber include:

- Vegetables
- Fruit
- Beans
- Peas
- Nuts
- Fiber-rich whole-grain breads and cereals

How Do You Read Nutrition Facts?

Nutrition Facts		
Serving Size	21 Biscuits (54g)	
Amount Per Serving	Cereal	with 1/2 cup skim milk
Calories	190	230
Calories from Fat	10	10
% Daily Value**		
Total Fat 1g*	2%	2%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%	0%
Trans Fat 0g		
Polyunsaturated Fat 0.5g		
Monounsaturated Fat 0g		
Cholesterol 0mg	0%	0%
Sodium 0mg	0%	3%
Potassium 200mg	6%	11%
Total Carbohydrate 46g	15%	17%
Dietary Fiber 6g	23%	23%
	11g	
	5g	

Nutrition Facts can tell you all about the nutrients and ingredients in a food. Nutrition Facts can help you choose foods that provide the nutrition that's right for you, including fiber. **Dietary fiber** is a nutrient listed under "Total Carbohydrate" on the Nutrition Facts.

Excellent sources of fiber have 5 or more grams of fiber per serving.
Good sources of fiber have at least 3 grams of fiber per serving.

If a food company makes a claim about the fiber of a food, the grams of fiber must be listed under "Total Carbohydrate."

Look at the list of ingredients if you want to know if a food is made with whole grains.

- Not all foods labeled “whole grain (/English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/Whole-Grains.aspx)” are a good source of fiber. Grains vary widely in their fiber content. For example, whole-grain wheat has more fiber than whole-grain brown rice or whole-grain oats.
- The amount of fiber in a whole-grain food can vary by brand.
- Whole grains include whole wheat, brown rice, bulgur, buckwheat, oatmeal, whole-grain cornmeal, whole oats, whole rye, and wild rice.



Protein 5g		
Vitamin A	0%	4%
Vitamin C	0%	0%
Calcium	0%	15%
Iron	90%	90%
Thiamin	25%	30%
Riboflavin	25%	35%
Niacin	25%	25%
Vitamin B ₆	25%	25%
Folic Acid	50%	50%
Vitamin B ₁₂	25%	35%
Phosphorus	15%	25%
Magnesium	10%	15%
Zinc	10%	15%
Copper	10%	10%
* Amount in cereal. One half cup of skim milk contributes an additional 40 calories, 65mg sodium, 6g total carbohydrates (6g sugars), and 4g protein.		
** Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:		
	Calories	2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g 80g
Sat. Fat	Less than	20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg 2,400mg
Potassium		3,500mg 3,500mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g 375g
Dietary Fiber		25g 30g

Ingredients: Whole grain wheat, sugar, contains 2% or less of brown rice syrup, gelatin, BHT for freshness.

Additional Information

- Fiber: An Important Part of Your Teen's Diet (/English/ages-stages/teen/nutrition/Pages/Fiber-An-Important-Part-of-Your-Teens-Diet.aspx)
- Front of Package Nutrition Labels (/English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/Front-of-Package-Nutrition-Labels.aspx)
- Breakfast Poster: 7 Days 7 Ways to Fit Fiber into Your Morning Menu (/Documents/tips-tools/Immunization%20Schedules/AAP_BREAKFAST_POSTER.pdf)(PDF)
- www.nutrition.gov/whats-food (http://www.nutrition.gov/whats-food) - If you want to know how much fiber is in a food that does not have a Nutrition Facts label, you can look it up here!

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Source More Fiber for Your Children? (Copyright © 2013 American Academy of Pediatrics)

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