

Fibre for children

This resource has information to help you increase your child's dietary fibre intake. Your child may require a higher fibre diet to help manage constipation.

What is fibre?

Dietary fibre is the part of plant food which is not broken down completely by our bodies. Fibre is only found in plant foods such as: breads and cereals, fruits and vegetables, nuts and seeds, and legumes. There is no fibre in foods that come from animals e.g. meat or dairy foods. There are two main types of fibre:

- Soluble fibre: absorbs water to form a soft gel which helps to soften stools
- Insoluble fibre: adds bulk to stools helping them to pass more quickly through the bowel

What is the role of fibre?

Dietary fibre plays an important role in keeping our bowels regular. A low fibre diet can lead to constipation and other health related issues. Constipation is dry, hard stools that are difficult to pass.

Ideas to increase fibre in your child's diet

Breads	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choose multigrain or wholemeal breads & wraps instead of white varieties• Try making sandwiches with one slice of wholemeal and one of white bread initially• Try wholemeal fruit loaf
Cereals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Choose wholegrain breakfast cereals e.g. Weetbix®, VitaBrits®, oat bran, bran, muesli, porridge, Sultana Bran®• Add a spoonful of almond meal, crushed nuts, seed mix, coconut, chia, dried fruit or bran to breakfast cereals

<p>Rice, pasta, biscuits, baked goods</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swap plain biscuits or crackers for wholemeal varieties and biscuits with fruit e.g. Shredded Wheatmeal®, Vita-Weat®, Premiums®, Wholemeal Salada®, Full O’Fruit® • Serve crackers with nut butters, avocado or hummus (chickpea dip) • Choose wholemeal, pulse or lentil pasta and brown rice instead of white varieties • Replace white flour with wholemeal flour in recipes • Choose baked recipes with dried/fresh fruit, crushed nuts/almond meal/LSA (linseed, sunflower and almond mix), nut butters, seeds, coconut, chia seeds and oats.
<p>Fruit and vegetables</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave the skin on fruits and vegetables where possible • Cut up fruit and vegetables and offer as snacks e.g. corn on the cob • Offer fresh or canned fruit over fruit juices • Add grated or chopped vegetables to meals e.g. mince dishes, casseroles, hamburger patties • Juices such as prune, pear and apple which contain sorbitol may have a laxative effect in some children. Consider a starting dose of 60-120mls
<p>Beans and legumes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try baked beans on toast for a breakfast or snack • Add legumes such as kidney beans, lentils or split peas to tacos, mince dishes, casserole dishes and soups • Offer hummus on wholemeal dry biscuits, vegetable sticks or toast • Offer higher fibre snacks e.g. roasted fav-va beans, roasted chickpeas
<p>Nuts* and seeds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use almond meal, crushed nuts, coconut, seeds or LSA (linseed, sunflower and almond mix) in cereal, homemade baked goods, smoothies, yoghurt • Offer nut/oat bars, bliss balls, dried fruit & nuts, nut butter on bread as a snack

** Whole nuts are not suitable for children under the age of 3 years due to choking risk*

Fluid and fibre requirements

Your child needs to drink plenty of water throughout the day. Water helps to make stools soft. Increasing fibre intake without increasing water can make constipation worse.

	Age	Fibre	Fluid
Boys and Girls	1–3 years	14g/day	1000mL/day
Boys and Girls	4–8 years	18g/day	1200mL/day
Boys	9–13 years	24g/day	1600mL/day
Boys	14–18 years	28g/day	1900mL/day
Girls	9–13 years	20g/day	1400mL/day
Girls	14–18 years	22g/day	1600mL/day

Other tips

- Encourage active play; exercising for at least 60 minutes per day and minimising screen time to 2 hours at most will help keep bowels regular
- Ensure your child has enough time to go to the toilet and do not rush them
- A good time to encourage your child to sit on the toilet is after a main meal for about 20 minutes
- If your child's constipation persists, talk to your GP/Paediatrician; medication may be prescribed to help manage constipation

How to increase fibre in your child's diet

- _____
- _____
- _____

Dietitian contact details

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Fibre content of foods

Food	Serve size	Fibre (g)	Food	Serve size	Fibre (g)
Breads and grains			Strawberries	1 cup	4.0
Multigrain bread	1 slice	3.2	Canned fruit	1 cup	3.5
Wholemeal bread	1 slice	2.0	Apple / Orange	1 medium	3.5
White high fibre bread	1 slice	1.5	Mango	1 medium	3.1
White bread	1 slice	1.0	Dried apricots	6 small	2.5
Wholemeal wrap/pita	1	2-3	Banana	1 small	2.5
			Sultanas	40g	2.2
Cereals			Vegetables		
All Bran®	½ cup	8.8	Baked beans	220g	10.5
Sultana Bran®	1 cup	7.2	Corn on the cob	1 medium	5.5
Rolled oats	½ cup	5.7	Chickpeas (cooked)	½ cup	4.9
Muesli	½ cup	5.5	Lentils (cooked)	½ cup	3.8
Just Right	⅔ cup	4.1	Peas (frozen)	½ cup	4.5
Weetbix®	2 biscuits	3.5	Avocado	¼	3.0
Cheerios Wholegrain®	1 cup	2.2	Broccoli	½ cup	3.0
Corn flakes	1 cup	1.0	Carrots	½ cup	2.5
			Green beans	½ cup	2.0
Rice/pasta/biscuits			Tomato	1 medium	1.8
Wholemeal pasta (cooked)	½ cup	4.3	Pumpkin	85g	1.5
White pasta (cooked)	½ cup	1.6	Salad	1 cup	1-2
Brown rice (cooked)	½ cup	1.4	Potato (mash)	½ cup	1.2
White rice (cooked)	½ cup	0.75			
Shredded wheatmeal®	2 biscuits	14	Miscellaneous		
Vita-Weat®	2 biscuits	1.3	Roasted chickpeas	25g	4-5
Wholemeal Salada®	1 biscuit	1.0	Nuts (mixed)	¼ cup	3
			Nut/Oat bar	1 bar	2-3
Fruit			Fav-va beans	25g	1.6
Pear	1 medium	5.5	Bliss balls	2 balls	1.5
Prunes	6 medium	4.5	Peanut paste	1 tbsp	1.3
Grapes	1 cup	5.0			