

# Eat More Soluble Fibre

## What is fibre?

Fibre is a carbohydrate our bodies can't digest (break down) and absorb. It comes from:

- beans, lentils, and split peas
- fruits
- grains
- nuts and seeds
- vegetables

There are 2 types of fibre: soluble and insoluble. All foods with fibre have more than one type.

**Insoluble fibre** doesn't mix well (dissolve) in water. It helps poop move through your bowel more quickly and keeps your poops regular.

**Soluble fibre** mixes well (dissolves) in water. This handout will focus on how soluble fibre can improve your health.

## How much soluble fibre do I need?

**Children:** Ask your healthcare provider about how much your child needs.

**Adults:** Try to get at least 5–10 g of soluble fibre each day.

The amounts of soluble fibre in common foods are on pages 3–4. Talk to a dietitian to find out how much soluble fibre is right for you.

## Tips for getting started with eating more soluble fibre

### Gradually eat more fibre

When you start eating more fibre, you may have some gas, bloating, or discomfort. Slowly increase your fibre to help your body get used to it.

## Drink enough fluids daily

When you eat more fibre, you also need extra fluid. This keeps your poop soft. Drink enough fluids each day, like water, milk, coffee, tea, broth, and soup.

Age	Fluid per day
Children 2–8 years old	4–5 cups (0.9–1.2 L)
Children 9–13 years old	6–7 cups (1.6–1.8 L)
Children 14–18 years old	7–10 cups (1.8–2.6 L)
Adults	9–12 cup (2.25–3 L)

## Types of soluble fibre

There are different types of soluble fibre:

- Gel-forming fibre
- Prebiotic and fermenting fibre

Each type has different health benefits.

### Gel-forming fibre

When mixed with water, this type of soluble fibre forms a thick gel. It is sometimes called “viscous fibre”.

Gel-forming fibre:

- firms-up loose poop and softens firm poop
- helps you feel full
- improves blood sugars
- lowers cholesterol

### Food sources

Barley and oats

- Replace at least half of the flour with oat or barley flour when baking. You can make oat flour by blending rolled oats in a blender or food processor.
- Add oats or oat bran to muffins and cookies.
- Try making mantou, pita, and roti with oat or barley flour.
- Add oats or barley to congee.
- Have cooked barley instead of rice or pasta.
- Cook a big batch of barley and freeze in smaller portions to use later.

Fruits like apples, apricots, oranges, and pears, and vegetables like sweet potatoes and winter squash

- Make a fruit salad.
- Eat fruit as a snack.
- Try sweet potatoes or squash as a side dish or in soup.

Ground flaxseeds and whole or ground chia seeds

- Add to cold and hot cereals, yogurt, breads, baking, and smoothies.

Konjac

- Try konjac (shirataki) noodles, pasta, or rice.

Psyllium

- Comes in many forms: husks, powder, pills, cookies, cereal, and bars.
- Add 1–2 Tbsp (15–30 mL) of psyllium husk or powder to water, juice, smoothies, or hot or cold cereals. Drink or eat before it thickens.
- Use psyllium powder to thicken sauces, soups, and stews. Add small amounts at a time and wait a few minutes for it to thicken.
- Mix 1–2 tsp (5–10 mL) psyllium husk or powder with frozen berries. As the berries thaw, the psyllium thickens it like a jam.
- Add psyllium husk to baking, such as bread, buns, and muffins. For example:
  - To replace an egg in a recipe, mix 1 tsp (5 mL) psyllium husk with ¼ cup (60 mL) water. Wait until it forms a gel.
  - For every 1 cup (250 mL) flour in your recipe, add 1 Tbsp (15 mL) psyllium husk.

## Prebiotic and fermentable fibre

When mixed well (dissolved) in water, this type of soluble fibre doesn't form a gel.

Prebiotic and fermentable fibre:

- feeds the good bacteria in your gut
- helps the immune system
- maintains the health of the gut

## Food sources

Asparagus, chicory root, garlic, Jerusalem artichokes (sunchokes), leeks, onions, and wheat

- Bake, steam, or roast asparagus.
- Add onion to soup, stew, meatballs, and stir-fry.

Bananas, legumes, peas, plantains, and soybeans

- Snack on roasted chickpeas, lentils, soy nuts, or edamame.
- Add black, navy, or kidney beans, chickpeas, or lentils to salads, soups, stews, and meatloaf.
- Add pureed lentils to cookies and pasta sauce.
- Try using flours made from soy, chickpea, beans, or plantains in cooking and baking.
- Try pastas made from lentils and beans.
- Cook, then cool rice, pasta, and potatoes to increase prebiotic fibre. You can reheat when ready to eat.

Inulin

- Available as a powder and is added to foods like cereals and granola bars.
- Mix 1–2 tsp (5–10 mL) inulin in fluids like water or coffee, or in soft food like oatmeal.
- Inulin fibre supplements do not change the taste, colour, or texture of food or fluids.

## Fibre supplements

A fibre supplement may help if you aren't able to eat enough fibre-rich foods.

- Read the label and follow the directions on the package.
- It's important to drink the amount of fluid suggested on the package. Fibre supplements may cause gas, cramps, and bloating if you do not drink enough fluids.

Talk to your health care provider before starting a fibre supplement.

## For more support



- Talk to your healthcare team.
- Call Health Link at 811 and ask to talk to a dietitian or complete a self-referral form on [ahs.ca/811](https://ahs.ca/811).
- Visit [ahs.ca/nutrition](https://ahs.ca/nutrition).
- Call, text, or chat with 211 Alberta (<https://ab.211.ca/>) to find out about financial benefits, programs, and services.

# Food sources of soluble fibre

The table below provides a list of common foods higher in soluble fibre.

Food	Serving size	Soluble fibre
<b>Vegetables (cooked)</b>		
Winter squash	½ cup (125 mL)	1.9 g
Brussels sprouts	½ cup (125 mL)	1.9 g
Parsnip	½ cup (125 mL)	1.8 g
Sweet potatoes and yams	½ cup (125 mL)	1.4 g
Green peas	½ cup (125 mL)	1.3 g
Broccoli	½ cup (125 mL)	1.2 g
Carrots	½ cup (125 mL)	1.1 g
Turnip greens	½ cup (125 mL)	1.1 g
Okra	½ cup (125 mL)	1.0 g
Beets	½ cup (125 mL)	1.0 g
Onion	½ cup (125 mL)	1.0 g
Asparagus	½ cup (125 mL)	0.7 g
Eggplant	½ cup (125 mL)	0.4 g

## Fruits

Pear	1 medium	2.2 g
Fig, dried	¼ cup (60 mL)	2.0 g
Orange	1 medium	1.8 g
Avocado	½ medium	1.6 g
Fig, fresh	½ cup (125 mL)	1.5 g
Blackberry	1 cup (250 mL)	1.4 g
Apricot, dried	¼ cup (60 mL)	1.4 g
Grapefruit	½ medium	1.2 g
Apple	1 medium	1.0 g
Applesauce	1 cup (250 mL)	0.9 g
Strawberry	1 cup (250 mL)	0.9 g
Mango	½ medium	0.8 g
Nectarine	1 medium	0.8 g
Prunes, dried	¼ cup (60 mL)	0.8 g
Banana	1 medium	0.7 g

## Cereals

Bran cereal with added psyllium	½ cup (125 mL)	3.8 g
Granola	½ cup (125 mL)	1.3 g
Oat bran	½ cup (125 mL)	1.3 g
Oatmeal, cooked	½ cup (125 mL)	0.9 g
O-shaped cereal	1 cup (250 mL)	0.9 g
Oat cereal, muesli	½ cup (125 mL)	0.7 g
Wheat germ	2 Tbsp (30 mL)	0.5 g
Wheat bran	2 Tbsp (30 mL)	0.3 g

Food	Serving size	Soluble fibre
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### Grain, rice, and pasta

Konjac noodles	½ cup (125 mL)	3.0 g
Amaranth, dry	¼ cup (60 mL)	2.4 g
Soy flour	¼ cup (60 mL)	2.0 g
Potato flour	¼ cup (60 mL)	1.3 g
Corn flour	¼ cup (60 mL)	1.2 g
Barley, cooked	½ cup (125 mL)	0.9 g
Barley flour	¼ cup (60 mL)	0.8 g
Quinoa, cooked	½ cup (125 mL)	0.6 g
Millet, cooked	½ cup (125 mL)	0.6 g
Pasta, whole wheat, cooked	½ cup (125 mL)	0.4 g

### Legumes and soybeans (cooked)

Lima beans	½ cup (125 mL)	3.5 g
Soybeans, roasted	¼ cup (60 mL)	3.4 g
Kidney beans	½ cup (125 mL)	2.8 g
Black beans	½ cup (125 mL)	2.4 g
Navy beans	½ cup (125 mL)	2.2 g
Refried beans	½ cup (125 mL)	2.1 g
Pinto beans	½ cup (125 mL)	1.9 g
Edamame (green soybean)	½ cup (125 mL)	1.7 g
Chickpeas (garbanzo beans)	½ cup (125 mL)	1.3 g
Split peas, yellow or green	½ cup (125 mL)	1.1 g
Lentils	½ cup (125 mL)	0.6 g

### Nuts and seeds

Flax seeds, ground	2 Tbsp (30 mL)	1.8 g
Chia seeds	2 Tbsp (30 mL)	1.0 g
Sunflower seeds	¼ cup (60 mL)	0.7 g
Peanuts	¼ cup (60 mL)	0.7 g
Macadamia nuts	¼ cup (60 mL)	0.6 g
Tahini (sesame seed butter)	2 Tbsp (30 mL)	0.6 g
Peanut butter	2 Tbsp (30 mL)	0.5 g
Almonds	¼ cup (60 mL)	0.4 g

### Baking

Carob flour or powder	1 Tbsp (15 mL)	2.0 g
Cocoa powder, unsweetened	1 Tbsp (15 mL)	0.4 g

