

## *Plant This Idea: Fill Up On Fiber*

Fiber is an important part of our diet, but what is it and how do we get the amount we need to reap its healthy rewards? One way to remember fiber: Think plants. Dietary fiber is found only in plant foods like whole grains, fruits, nuts and vegetables. It consists of certain carbohydrates our bodies can't digest or absorb in the bloodstream. Instead of being used for energy like other carbohydrates, fiber is eliminated, taking with it waste products the body doesn't need.

There are two types of dietary fiber – soluble and insoluble. Both are beneficial but have very different missions. Soluble fiber, found in foods like oats and oat bran, brown rice and beans, may help decrease blood cholesterol levels, reducing your risk of heart disease. Soluble fiber can also help control the rise of blood sugar levels after eating. Insoluble fiber, also known as “roughage,” helps to “move things along” in the digestive tract. Sources of insoluble fiber include whole-grain breads and cereals; wheat, oat and corn bran; many vegetables, like broccoli, green beans and sweet potatoes. Some foods, such as oatmeal and beans, have both soluble and insoluble fiber. When making your food choices, don't get hung up on which fiber is which. By eating a variety of plant-based foods, you will get fiber in your diet while also enjoying great tasting meals. Eating high-fiber foods can help you feel full sooner, so you eat less.

You can increase your daily fiber with these tips:

- ▶ Eat whole-grain cereals for breakfast.
- ▶ Eat at least two pieces of whole fruit per day, such as pears, apples, bananas and strawberries. Add them to your cereal, yogurt or salads.
- ▶ Eat whole-wheat bread. Remember, just because it's brown doesn't mean it's whole-wheat. Check the label to make sure it reads “whole-wheat.”
- ▶ Add tomatoes, lettuce or other vegetables to sandwiches.
- ▶ For a snack, munch on popcorn, which is also a whole grain. Go easy on the salt and butter.
- ▶ Make side dishes with short-grain brown rice. It's loaded with fiber and flavor.
- ▶ Put vegetables in soups and pasta dishes. If you're having pizza, load up on the vegetable toppings.

You'll quickly find adding fiber to your diet is easy and a great way to keep healthy.

Source: [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

**BALANCED CHOICES**  
*for a healthy lifestyle*

Monthly **SUPERFOODS** Promotion

### Yogurt

is rich in calcium and an excellent source of protein!

Yogurt is milk that has been inoculated with 2 live cultures: *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* and *Streptococcus thermophilus*.

Probiotics are helpful bacteria

Yogurt is extremely versatile and can be used as a substitute for many high-fat foods such as mayonnaise, sour cream, cream, and ice cream.