

Fiber and Whole Grains

Fiber

Fiber is one of the most important items in our diet

- lowers risk of heart disease, cancer, lung problems
- lowers risk and helps control diabetes (a high fiber diet lowers risk of diabetes by at least one third)
- helps weight loss
- assists with digestive complaints such as constipation, diarrhea, heartburn, inflammatory bowel disease
- increase longevity

Benefits of Fiber

- creates a sense of fullness when eating, helping to shut down our appetite, satisfies hunger and minimizes overconsumption of calories
- helps to stabilize blood sugars and decrease the blood sugar spike after eating
- contains many important antioxidants
- helps to lower cholesterol (biggest killer of diabetics is heart disease)

How much fiber?

- most Americans eat about 10 grams of fiber a day
- recommendation is for 45 to 60 grams of fiber a day

Where is fiber found?

- fiber is only in plant foods, there is no fiber in meat or dairy products
- top five fruits - raspberries/blackberries, pears, apples, oranges, bananas
- top five vegetables - avocado, broccoli, spinach, sweet potato, carrots
- top five beans - navy beans, lentils, pinto beans, black beans, kidney beans
- top five nuts and seeds - flaxseeds, almonds, sunflower seeds, peanuts, walnuts
- top five grains - wheat, pearl barley, quinoa, oats, brown rice

Whole Grains

Benefits

- one of the best protective fiber food for diabetes
- lower risk of weight gain
 - An eight-year study of American men found that those who ate more whole grains gained less weight. In fact, each additional 1.4 ounces of whole grains eaten per day staved off a pound of weight gain.
 - Similarly, a twelve-year study of women in the U.S. discovered that those who consumed more whole grains consistently weighed less than other women.
- reduce inflammation
 - 3 servings of whole grains per day reduced the risk of developing diabetes by 32%
 - a 26% decrease in the risk of developing diabetes, as well as a 21% lower risk of cardiovascular disease with higher whole-grain consumption. Specific risk markers improved by these foods included fasting glucose, insulin, cholesterol, and blood pressure
- promote beneficial gut microbes
- dense with vitamins, minerals, amino acids, antioxidants, and phytochemicals

Types of Grains

- refined grains - the healthy bran, germ, and nutrients have been stripped away
 - processed grains
- whole grains - wheat, corn, rice, barley, oats, millet, and rye
- pseudo-grains - quinoa, buckwheat, wild rice, and amaranth

Choosing Whole Grains

- preparing at home is best
- processed foods sometimes labeled “whole” grains but check the label
- look for ratio of 5 or less fiber to carbohydrates