What is Fiber?
Fiber is a type of carbohydrate that the body can't digest. Unlike most carbohydrates, fiber doesn't get broken down into sugar molecules. Instead, it passes through the body undigested. Fiber helps regulate the body's use of sugars, helping keep hunger and blood sugar in check.

Types of Fiber
There are two types of fiber: soluble and insoluble.

- **Soluble Fiber**
  - Dissolves into a gel when mixed with water
  - Balances blood sugar, lowers LDL cholesterol
  - Keeps you feeling fuller longer

- **Insoluble Fiber**
  - Does not dissolve in water
  - Adds bulk to stool, promoting regularity, and preventing constipation

Fiber Has Many Superpowers:

- **Good For Your Heart**
  Eating plenty of fiber lowers your risk for heart disease, stroke, and type II diabetes.

- **Lowers Cholesterol**
  Soluble fiber can help lower LDL cholesterol, by binding to it in the digestive system.

- **Balances Blood Sugar**
  Fiber helps promote balanced blood sugar. Diabetics who eat high-fiber diets can control their diabetes better than those who don't.

How Much Fiber Should I Eat?

Children and adults need at least 20 – 30g of fiber every day.

However, most Americans get only about 15g a day.

Great sources of fiber are whole fruits and vegetables, beans, whole grains, and many nuts and seeds.
Reading Food Labels

Look for the "dietary fiber" content on food labels. Good sources of fiber have at least 10% of the "daily value" for fiber.

**Nutrition Facts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serving Size</th>
<th>Serving Size 1 avocado 201g (201 g)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount Per Serving</td>
<td>Calories 322 Calories from Fat 247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Fat</td>
<td>29g 45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturated Fat</td>
<td>4g 21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trans Fat</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol</td>
<td>0mg 0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sodium</td>
<td>14mg 1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Carbohydrate</td>
<td>17g 6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dietary Fiber</td>
<td>13g 54%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sugars</td>
<td>1g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein</td>
<td>4g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin A</td>
<td>6% • Vitamin C 33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcium</td>
<td>2% • Iron 6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

**Look for Whole Grain Foods**

Whole grain foods are a good source of fiber, but packaging can be misleading. To find whole grain foods, look for the words "whole wheat" or "whole grain" in the ingredient list. Be weary of the words "multigrain", "wheat", or "enriched flour," which do not mean whole grain.

![Labels showing 100% whole grain](image)

Look for these labels to tell if a food is 100% whole grain (left) or just contains some whole grains (right).

**Good Sources of Fiber**

Both soluble and insoluble fiber are critical for a healthy digestive system. To get all the benefits of fiber, focus on eating a variety of fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts, seeds, and whole grains.

- **Black and Pinto Beans, cooked**
  8g fiber per 1/2 cup serving

- **Barley, cooked**
  6g fiber per 1/2 cup serving

- **Pumpkin Seeds**
  5g fiber per 1oz handful

- **Avocado**
  6g fiber per 1/2 cup serving

- **Quinoa, cooked**
  5g fiber per 1/2 cup serving

- **Pear (with skin)**
  5g fiber in 1 medium pear

- **Spinach, cooked**
  4g fiber in 1 cup

- **Raspberries**
  4g fiber in 1/2 cup berries

- **Broccoli, cooked**
  3g fiber in 1/2 cup serving

- **Banana**
  3g fiber in 1 medium banana

VeggieRx Cooking & Nutrition
Learn more at freshapproach.org/veggierx