

Lack of fibre

Despite all the health warnings, our fibre intake is still disappointingly low.

The average intake in the UK is approximately 11 to 13g per day. The recommendations are 18 to 24 grams per day.

People prone to chronic constipation should aim for a fibre intake of 32 grams per day.

Recent studies reveal that people who eat more wholegrains and high-fibre foods have a lower risk of obesity, cancer, diabetes and heart disease. A high fibre diet goes hand in hand with a healthy diet.

If you are rushed and on the go, your diet might look like this:

Food	Fibre (g)
30 g Corn Flakes with semi-skimmed milk	0.75
2 White Baps with spread and cheese	4.2
1 Bag of Crisps	1.35
1 Orange	2.7
Ham and Mushroom Pizza	2
Total	11

Fibre is found in plant food. There are two kinds of fibre – insoluble and soluble fibre, plant foods contain both types, but proportions may vary.

Dietary fibre is not digested and passes through the digestive tract, providing bulk to keep us feeling full and satisfied. Fibre helps the efficient passage of food through the gut and provides a food source for the friendly bacteria that live in the colon. When the diet is low in fibre, your gut will struggle to work well.

We associate fibre as being food for a healthy digestive system and to prevent constipation, however, the benefits of eating enough fibre stretch far beyond digestion.

How does fibre help to maintain good health?

- Fibre maintains gut integrity
- A high fibre diet decreases the risk of colon cancer by 40%
- Those eating high fibre diets tend to be slimmer than those eating lower fibre diets
- High fibre diets helps prevent Type 2 Diabetes and improves blood sugar control for people with diabetes
- Both soluble and insoluble fibre helps reduce the risk of heart disease through cholesterol-reduction and the beneficial effects of phyto-nutrients.
- A higher fibre intake, especially at breakfast, can combat fatigue and improve general mood

It is always the best to get your fibre naturally, from high-fibre whole-foods, rather than from bran supplements. If you need to increase your fibre intake, do so gradually. Dietary fibre absorbs water as it passes through the body, so make sure you drink plenty of non-caffeine based fluid. The best sources of fibre are pulses and legumes, whole-grain products, e.g. bread, cereals, pasta and brown rice, dried fruit, fresh fruit and vegetables.