

Diet for a Healthy Bowel

Eat a diet high in fibre

We need at least 30g fibre/day. There are 2 types of fibre, Soluble and Insoluble.

Insoluble Fibre helps speed up and bulk up our bowel motions, preventing constipation and associated problems like hemorrhoids.

Soluble Fibre turns our bowel motions into a gel, binding them to make them firmer. The best fibre to have if your stools are too soft/loose. They also help reduce blood cholesterol levels.

Insoluble Fibres	Soluble Fibres
Multigrain/Wholegrain bread	Oats/Barley
Wheat/corn/rice brans & cereals	Rye
Bran	Seed Husks/Flaxseed/Psyllium
Nuts/seeds	Legumes (lentils, kidney beans etc)
Fibrous Vegetables	Peeled Fruit & Vegetables
Fruit & Vegetable skins	

Both types of fibre are beneficial for our bowels and most plant foods contain both types.

The best way to ensure you are getting enough fibre is to:

- Eat 2 – 3 serves of fruit each day
- Have 5 serves of Vegetables
- Eat 5 serves of wholegrain or whole meal breads & cereals each day

If increasing the fibre in your diet, it is recommended that you do it slowly to give your body time to adjust and reduce any side effects such as bloating or wind.

Fibre Supplements

There are many kinds of fibre supplements that you can try. They are not laxatives, they are simply a type of fibre that you can take to top up your intake. You do need to take care as some can cause tummy upsets or can aggravate or cause constipation. Best to check with your Doctor or Dietitian if you are taking or wish to take them.

Supplement	Fibre it Contains	Type of fibre
Metamucil	Psyllium husk	Soluble
Fybogel	Ispaghula	Soluble
Benefibre	Wheat dextrin	Soluble
Normafibe	Sterculia	Soluble
Metamucil Fibresure	Inulin	Soluble

Medications

There are 2 types of laxatives:

- Bowel stimulants: These increase bowel contractions to get the bowel moving
- Agents that increase water content: These swell/bulk the stool with water

Both can be a good treatment for constipation. Talk to your doctor about before taking any laxatives.

Other tips for a healthy bowel

Drink well

Drink at least 1.5 – 2L of fluid each day (unless otherwise advised by your doctor), checking that your urine is a pale yellow colour. Water is the best fluid. Limit caffeine, carbonated drinks and alcohol as these can dehydrate and cause bladder irritation.

Exercise

Aim to do at least 30 minutes of exercise most days. Not only can this help prevent constipation but it will help keep the pelvic floor toned and help you maintain a healthy body weight.

Fibre, Iron & Vitamin C content of Fruits and vegetables

Vegetables (all cooked)	Portion	Fibre (g)	Iron (mg)	Vitamin C (mg)
Spinach	¾ cup	5.6	2.7	14.4
Peas	½ cup	4.6	1.3	8.8
Broccoli	100g	4.2	1.0	86.7
Silver beet	1 cup	3.7	2.5	15
Potato, unpeeled	1 medium (6 – 8 cm diameter)	3.3	0.7	30
Corn	½ cup	2.7	0.5	4.3
Sweet Potato	1 medium 5 x 13cm	2.5	0.6	25
Cabbage	½ cup	2.4	0.4	26
Tomato	1 medium	2.0	0.3	30
Cauliflower	100g	1.7	0.6	52
Carrot	1 medium (17cm)	1.7	0.2	2.2
Avocado	¼ Avocado	1.2	0.6	7.2
Red Capsicum	1 medium	1.1	0.3	156.4
Spinach - Raw	1 cup chopped	0.9	1.1	9.5
Lettuce	1 cup	0.9	0.3	2.3
Green Capsicum	1 medium	0.8	0.6	82.8
Cucumber	5 slices	0.1	0.1	2.0
Fruit				
Nectarine	1 medium	3.6	0.2	18
Apple	1 medium	3.3	0.3	8.3
Strawberries	1 cup	3.3	0.9	68
Orange	1 medium	2.6	0.5	68
Kiwifruit	1 medium	2.6	0.4	56.9
Prunes	4 Prunes	2.5	0.4	0.6
Apricot	2 small	2.4	0.3	12
Banana	1 medium	2.2	0.5	12
Dried Apricot	6 halves	1.9	0.7	0.2
Dates	4 Dates	1.9	0.5	0
Watermelon	1/ 16 th whole	1.7	1.1	20
Mandarin	1 medium	1.7	0.3	40
Mango	½ Mango	1.6	0.5	29
Peaches (tinned)	½ cup	1.5	0.3	6.3
Blueberries	½ cup	1.4	0	10
Grapes (green)	100g	0.9	0.2	5.2