

James Aitken

MB, BS; LRCP, MRCS; MS; FRCS (Edin); FCS(SA); FRACS

General and Colorectal Surgery

Unit 4,
77 Grand Boulevard,
Joondalup, 6027

Suite 23,
Hollywood Specialist Centre,
95 Monash Avenue,
Nedlands, 6009

Tel: 6389 0244

Fax: 6389 0255

All correspondence to Hollywood

HIGH FIBRE GUIDE

This sheet gives you general high fibre dietary advice. For more specific advice you will need to see a Dietitian.

What is fibre?

In general terms fibre is that part of the food that is not digested in the small intestine. It is found in plant foods such as cereals, fruit and vegetables.

Many modern foods lack the fibre found in more traditional diets. This results in a hard, small stool that is difficult to propel through the large bowel. Such stools are a contributing factor to many large bowel problems.

The aim of your high fibre diet.

You should be passing a soft bulky stool without straining. This can be done by eating more high fibre foods and by drinking plenty of fluids. You should eat 30-35 grams of fibre per day.

How can you eat more fibre?

You just gradually eat more of the following:

- Bread** Eat wholemeal bread as it has more fibre than ordinary brown bread.
- Breakfast Cereals** Choose wholegrain or bran enriched varieties such as Weetabix, Porridge, All-Bran or Bran Flakes. Have a helping each day.
- Pasta and Rice** Try brown rice and wholemeal pasta such as macaroni, spaghetti or canned 'wholemeal' spaghetti hoops.
- Vegetables and Potatoes** Fresh or frozen vegetables (3-5 helpings daily) should be eaten daily. Legumes (pea, beans, lentils) are especially high in fibre.
- Fresh Fruit** Finish a meal with fruit (2 helpings daily). Take fruit as snacks. Include the skin. Dried fruits are also suitable.
- Biscuits** Choose rye crispbreads, oatcakes, bran or digestive in preference to tea biscuits or chocolate.
- Soups:** Choose those with lentils, beans or barley.

Unprocessed bran.

Include some bran if your bowels are not regular after eating ordinary high fibre foods, or you cannot eat a lot of the ordinary high fibre foods. If you do require bran, start cautiously with one tablespoon daily. If required, increase this to a maximum of two tablespoons daily. Try to find the combination of foods that suits you best.

Water.

Fibre binds water into the stool, making it softer and bulkier. Drink at least 1.5 to 2 litres each day. Fruit juices and fizzy drinks (e.g. colas) are high in calories.

Medication.

Initially an artificial bulking agent may be prescribed to supplement your diet whilst you increase your fibre intake. Options include Lactulose, Metamucil and other bulk laxatives. They all require a high fluid intake to work properly. You should be able to stop this after 3-4 weeks.