

June 2025

Your Monthly
Nourishment
of News

CD

The Caterplus Digest

FACTS
ABOUT

Fibre

CATERING WITH CARE
Caterplus



ELIOR



Hannah Allan, Dietitian

F

Although it is not always in the spotlight, fibre remains one of the fundamental components of a healthy diet.

Although the UK government raised the advised daily intake in 2015, many individuals are still not meeting these recommendations. This shortfall may be linked to a lack of awareness about its health benefits, the consumption of processed and convenience foods, and the growing trend of low-carb diets. In this edition of The Caterplus Digest, we focus on the crucial role fibre plays in maintaining health, reducing the risk of certain diseases and ideas for adding more into your diet.



What IS fibre?

Dietary fibre is a form of carbohydrate that is found naturally in plants.

Sugars and most starches are absorbed in the small intestine, whereas fibre remains intact as it passes into the large intestine, where some is then fully or partially broken down.

Soluble fibre

...absorbs water and forms a gel-like substance, which helps soften the faeces. It's found in foods like oats, beans, barley, apples, pears, carrots and sweet potatoes.



Insoluble fibre

...generally remains unchanged as it moves through the digestive tract, adding bulk to stools and aiding in waste removal. Good sources include nuts, bran, seeds, wholegrains, and the skins of fruits and vegetables.



DID YOU KNOW?

Unripe bananas, peas, sweetcorn, legumes and wholegrains contain resistant starch.

This is a type of soluble fibre that is fermented by the gut bacteria to produce short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs). These SCFAs support the health of the colon, brain and muscles, and can reduce cholesterol and blood sugar levels. It is important to note that this type of fibre can cause gas and bloating in some individuals. Cooking and then cooling foods like pasta and potatoes also increases their resistant starch content.



Eating FIBRE

What are the benefits?



Digestive Health

Fibre helps move waste through the digestive system, preventing constipation. Constipation can reduce appetite, cause discomfort and pain, and lead to swelling, inflammation and haemorrhoids.



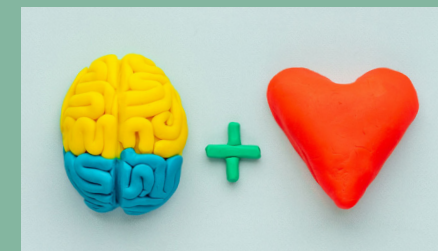
Cancer Prevention

A high-fibre diet may reduce the risk of colorectal cancer by helping remove harmful substances from the body. Some studies also suggest a link between higher fibre intakes and a lower risk of breast cancer.



Blood Sugar Control

Fibre has a lower glycaemic index than refined carbohydrates, causing blood sugar levels to rise more slowly. This can also provide longer-lasting energy, helping you feel less tired.



Chronic Disease Risk

People who consume more fibre have a lower risk of heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes.



Weight Management

Fibre slows digestion so you feel fuller for longer, which can help with maintaining a healthy weight.



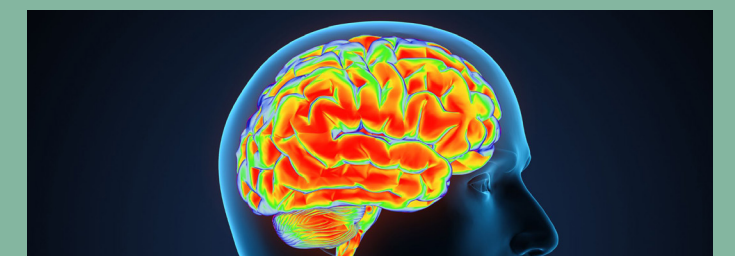
Cholesterol & Blood Pressure

Soluble fibre, found in foods such as oats and barley, can help lower LDL (bad) cholesterol and reduce blood pressure.



Gut Health

Prebiotics are a type of fibre, found in foods like onions, garlic, asparagus, artichokes and chicory, which support the growth of good gut bacteria (probiotics). This can help manage conditions like Ulcerative Colitis, constipation, bloating and Irritable Bowel Syndrome, and may reduce the risk of diarrhoea and stomach infections.



Brain Function

There is ongoing research focussing on the interactions between our gut and brain, known as the gut-brain axis. These studies suggest that good digestive health can play a role in supporting and protecting our brain function.

MAKE IT COUNT

Some of these commonly eaten foods can help you meet your fibre requirements.

			
8g 2 slices wholemeal toast with peanut butter	2g Banana or apple	8g Half a can of baked beans	4g Two Weetabix
			
5g Baked jacket potato (skin on)	3.5g A handful of nuts	5g Porridge (45g oats) and berries	2g 70-85% dark chocolate (20g)

Enough ROUGHAGE?

The National Diet and Nutrition Survey (NDNS) reports that 90% of UK adults don't consume enough fibre.



While the recommended daily intake for adults is 30 grams, on average people consume approximately 18 grams. If you have any existing health conditions or are planning significant dietary changes, it's best to always consult a healthcare professional. They can provide guidance on how to gradually and safely increase your fibre intake.

Answers: **TRUE** **FALSE** **1 FALSE** Cooking vegetables may alter the structure of fibre and make it easier to digest, but it doesn't decrease the total fibre content. Including a variety of cooked, raw, frozen, fresh and canned fruits and vegetables can all help digestive health.

TRUE FALSE

Check your answers at the bottom of the page



1 **TRUE** Cooking vegetables will lower the fibre content












2 **TRUE** Most of the fibre in a potato is found in the skin



2 TRUE Potato skins contain a high proportion of fibre, so keeping the skins on can help boost your intakes.

Full of FIBRE

How to boost your Intakes

	Choose high-fibre cereals for breakfast such as Bran Flakes, Muesli, Porridge, Weetabix or Shredded Wheat
	Snack on nibbles like nuts, seeds, or dried fruit
	Top toast or crackers with nut butter, sliced banana or mashed avocado
	Add berries & chopped nuts to yoghurt
	Include legumes like lentils, beans and chickpeas in soups, stews and curries
	Keep the skins on chips, potato wedges, new potatoes, vegetables and fruits
	Choose fruit-based desserts instead of chocolate or syrup puddings
	Use alternative flours such as chickpea, wholemeal, almond or coconut flour in baking or as thickeners
	Choose wholegrain or alternatives such as brown rice and wholemeal pasta, or try lentil pasta or cauliflower rice
	Aim to eat at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables each day
	Select fibre-rich breads like wholemeal, granary, seeded or rye

Label CHECKS!

Food packaging often lists the fibre content.

Products containing at least 3g of fibre per 100g are considered a source of fibre, while those with 6g or more per 100g are classified as high in fibre.

White OR wholegrain

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

WHITE	WHOLEGRAIN
180g white pasta = 3g	180g wholewheat pasta = 7g
125g white basmati rice = 1g	125g wholegrain rice = 6g
1 slice white bread = 1g	1 slice granary seeded bread = 3g
	1 slice brown bread = 2g

Fluids & fibre



Staying well-hydrated is essential for moving fibre through the body and soluble fibre absorbs water in the intestines.

Aim to drink 6–8 glasses of fluid daily and more if you are exercising or in warm weather. Some foods can also help with hydration, including cucumbers, tomatoes, melons, oranges, broccoli and apples, which all have a high water content.

Please contact us on nutritionteam@caterplus.co.uk to request a particular topic, or to ask any questions about the newsletter. Please continue to raise any questions regarding the catering service or individual residents to your dedicated Operations Manager. We hope you've enjoyed this month's newsletter, curated by our Dietitian, Hannah Allan.

Recipe

This vibrant, warming soup contains lentils, sweet potato, carrot and almonds which are sources of fibre. Onions and garlic can help support the good bacteria in your gut.

Creamy lentil and sweet potato soup with crunchy croutons Serves 4

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp rapeseed or olive oil (plus extra for drizzling)
- 1 large onion (finely chopped)
- 3 garlic cloves (crushed or finely chopped)
- 500g sweet potato (cut into chunks)
- 1–2 carrots (chopped, no need to peel)
- 1 tsp curry powder
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 200g dried red lentils

Method

- Heat the oil in a large, heavy-based saucepan over a medium heat. Add the onion, garlic, sweet potato and carrot. Cook gently for about 5 minutes, until the onion is softened
- Stir in the curry powder and cumin, followed by the red lentils and vegetable stock. Cover with a lid and simmer for 30 minutes, or until the vegetables and lentils are tender
- While the soup simmers, preheat the oven to 220°C (200°C fan)/Gas 7



- 2 tbsp almond butter
- 1 litre vegetable stock
- 2 heaped tbsp double cream
- A handful of toasted, flaked almonds
- Salt and pepper (to taste)
- Fresh coriander leaves (to garnish)
- 2 large slices wholegrain, rye or seeded bread

- Tear or cut the bread into chunks, place on a baking tray, and drizzle with olive oil. Bake for 8 minutes, or until golden and crispy
- Once the soup ingredients are cooked, add the almond butter and cream. Blend until smooth using a hand blender or food processor
- Season with salt and pepper to taste.
- Serve the soup hot, topped with toasted almonds, fresh coriander and the crunchy homemade croutons

Final thoughts

Eating enough fibre is no longer just about keeping things moving. It plays an essential role in lowering the risk of chronic diseases and may even support brain health.

While reaching the recommended 30g a day may seem daunting, small changes can make a difference. Swap refined carbohydrates for wholegrains, leave the skins on the vegetables and try sprinkling dried fruit, berries or nuts over your breakfast or dessert. Check labels for their fibre content and keep plenty of fresh fruit on hand for snacks. If you have concerns about your gut or bowel health check with a healthcare professional for advice.



What's coming up...

Next month, we will be focusing on Coeliac Disease – what it is, how it's diagnosed and how it can be managed. We will share some practical tips for eating out, eliminating gluten from meals and some recipe ideas.





ELIOR