

# The Importance of Fibre and Gut Health



Let's talk about a dietician's favourite F-word — fibre! So, what is fibre, and why is it important?

Fibre is a type of carbohydrate that our body cannot digest. Normally, when we eat carbohydrates, our body breaks them down into sugar for energy, but fibre passes through our digestive system without being broken down. Fibre does plenty of good things for our bodies. It helps keep our blood sugar levels stable, keeps bowel movements regular, and helps lower the risk of heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, obesity, Type 2

diabetes, and some types of cancer.

There are two main types of fibre, and each one helps us in different ways.

## Types of Fibre

**1. Soluble Fibre:** This type of fibre is found in foods like oats, bran, beans, nuts, seeds, lentils, some fruits, and many vegetables. Soluble fibre absorbs water and turns into a gel-like substance when it is digested. It helps lower the risk of heart disease, lower cholesterol levels, and keep blood sugar levels in check.

**2. Insoluble Fibre:** This type is found in whole wheat, whole grain products, wheat bran, and many vegetables. It is mostly found in the skin of certain foods. Insoluble fibre helps food move through the stomach faster and is great for gut health. It can also help prevent constipation.

## Why Fibre is Important for the Gut

The human gut is home to billions of tiny bacteria that help digest food. Fibre is food for "good" bacteria in the gut, helping them grow and stay strong. When these good bacteria eat fibre, they produce acids that keep the colon healthy. Eating fibre also helps protect the mucus layer in the gut, which keeps harmful bacteria out. Without enough fibre, harmful bacteria can break down this protective layer, making the body more prone to infections and inflammation.

People with low-fibre diets may experience bloating, gas, constipation, stomach cramps, acid reflux, fatigue, and Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)-like symptoms, all of which are linked to poor gut health.

The Health and Stroke Foundation of Canada recommends that adults should aim to get 28-38 grams of fibre each day. Make sure to include fibre-rich foods in your meals for long-term health. Try this [kale quinoa recipe](#) to start enjoying the benefits of fibre today!



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