



Urology Consultants, Ltd.

Center for Continence Care and Pelvic Medicine

DIETARY FIBER

The addition of fiber to your diet can make an enormous difference in your bowel control and regularity. Fiber works by bulking stool and keeping it formed, yet making the movement soft and easy to pass. Fiber helps keep moisture within the stool so neither diarrhea or hard stools occur. Fiber makes the bowels work more regularly, but is not a laxative. An additional bonus from eating fiber is that your risk of cancer is reduced.

Most of us eat some fiber containing foods already, but nearly all of us do not eat the necessary amount. For example, a slice of whole wheat bread contains only about 10% of the daily recommended amount of fiber. This means if you were relying on only whole wheat bread to meet your daily fiber requirement, you would need to eat between 10-18 slices a day!

The recommended daily fiber intake is 25 grams for women and 35 grams for men. Foods high in fiber include:

Food Product	Serving Size	Grams of Fiber Per Serving
Fiber One Cereal	½ cup	13
All Bran Cereal	½ cup	6
Brown Rice	½ cup	5.2
Banana	1 medium	3.8
Prunes	3	3.5
Raisins	¼ cup	3.5
Apple	1 small	2.8
Broccoli	½ cup	2.8
Spaghetti	2 ounces	2.5
Oatmeal	1 ounce	2.5
White Bread	1 slice	2
Potato, baked, skin on	1	2
Corn	½ cup	1.9
Popcorn	3 cups	1.9
White Rice	½ cup	1.4

Another good source of dietary fiber is through fiber supplements such as **Benefiber®**. This product can be purchased at the grocery store, health food store, or pharmacy. It can be mixed with beverages or soft foods and is both tasteless and colorless.

You need to be drinking enough fluid for the fiber in your diet to work. If you only increase your fiber without increasing your fluid you may make your constipation worse. Very few people drink the recommended amount of fluid. **You should be drinking at least 64 ounces or eight 8-ounce glasses each day.** Do not include caffeine in the total amount you are drinking. It actually causes you to lose more fluid and therefore should be avoided.

It may take your system a few weeks to get used to processing the added fiber and fluid. Try gradually increasing your fiber each day by about 5 grams. You may also break up your fiber intake and have some in the morning and some in the evening.