



33 Miller Avenue • Mill Valley, California 94941 • Phone: 415-380-9242 • Fax: 415-388-7458
351 San Andreas Drive • Novato, California 94945 • Phone: 415-878-4986 • Fax: 415-897-4771

Types of Fiber

There are two main types of fiber: insoluble and soluble. Both of these types can prevent and relieve constipation and diarrhea, although some people find one or the other to be more easily digested. This handout details information about both types of fiber.

Insoluble Fiber

Functions of Insoluble Fiber

- moves bulk through the intestines
- controls and balances the pH (acidity) in the intestines

Benefits of Insoluble Fiber

- promotes regular bowel movement and prevents constipation
- removes fecal waste through colon in less time
- keeps an optimal pH in intestines to prevent microbes from producing cancer substances, therefore preventing colon cancer

Food Sources of Insoluble Fiber

- whole-wheat products
- wheat bran "miller's bran"
- corn bran
- flax seed or other seeds
- vegetables such as green beans, broccoli, cauliflower and potato skins
- fruit skins and root vegetable skins
- popcorn
- brown rice

Soluble Fiber

Functions of Soluble Fiber

- holds water in the colon to bulk and soften the stool
- prolongs stomach emptying time so that sugar is released and absorbed more slowly

Benefits of Soluble Fiber

- lowers total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol (the bad cholesterol) therefore reducing the risk of heart disease
- regulates blood sugar for people with diabetes

Food Sources of Soluble Fiber

- oat/oat bran
- dried beans and peas
- nuts
- barley
- flax seed or other seeds
- fruits such as oranges, pears, peaches, and apples
- vegetables such as carrots
- psyllium husk
- prunes