

## 3 Health Benefits of Fiber

by Kaiser Permanente | March 10, 2025

Eating more fiber is a great way to take care of **your heart**. But it also **benefits your whole body**. Foods high in fiber can help lower your risk of heart disease, diabetes, and some types of cancer.<sup>1</sup> They can also help with weight loss.

Yet the average American eats only about 15 grams of fiber per day. That's well below the recommended amount. Women 50 and younger should aim for 25 to 28 grams per day. For men 50 and younger, the daily recommended amount jumps to 31 to 34 grams per day, or 28 grams per day for men 51 and older.<sup>2</sup>

So, **how can you get more fiber in your diet?** Cardiologist Mingsum Lee, MD, and registered dietitian Stephanie Burke, MS, RD, at Kaiser Permanente share the many benefits of fiber — and tips on how to add fiber to your day.

**The health benefits of fiber:** Fiber has many health benefits. For example, it:

- **Promotes heart health**  
“Fiber lowers your risk factors and reduces your risk of developing heart disease,” says Dr. Lee. “If you already have heart disease, fiber reduces your risk of dying from heart disease.”
- **Helps with weight management**  
“Fiber can help keep you full longer. And learning to listen to your body’s signals of hunger and fullness is a part of intuitive eating — which can help you have a healthy relationship with food,” says Burke.
- **Lowers cholesterol**  
Eating soluble fiber — the kind found in **beans and oats** — is a great way to lower your low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol. That’s known as “bad” cholesterol.

### 3 tips for eating more fiber

Dietary fiber is found in many **fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and beans**. Here are simple steps you can take to eat more fiber:

- Add fiber to every meal. “Spread fiber out throughout the day,” says Burke. “Try to include a fruit, vegetable, or other plant-based food, such as oatmeal with breakfast, whole wheat bread on your sandwich at lunch, and beans with dinner.”
- Focus on whole grains. What’s the number one tip for heart health? “Eat more whole grains,” says Dr. Lee. So instead of white bread or refined pasta, try farro or quinoa as the base of your next meal.
- Snack smart. Keep healthy foods on hand, like **avocados and fresh berries**, so you’ll have heart-healthy options. Not sure how much fiber is in your food? Look at food labels, which will tell you the amount of fiber in a product — along with the percent daily value (%DV).

Like with any change to your diet, remember to make sure to talk to your doctor first. It’s also important to increase your fiber intake slowly — especially if you’ve been on a low-fiber diet. This will give your body time to adjust. If you start to feel bloated or develop excessive gas, you may need to increase your daily fiber more slowly.

### Your heart health matters

Protecting your heart goes beyond healthy eating. Explore the many ways we’re promoting heart health.