

# Fibre

## What is Fibre?

Fibre is plant-based carbohydrate that is not digested nor absorbed in the small intestine, and therefore passes straight through the digestive tract. Fibre is sometimes referred to as 'dietary fibre' or 'roughage'. Other carbohydrates, such as sugars and starch, differ as these are digested in the small intestine.

## What is resistant starch?

Resistant starch is a type of fibre that does not get broken down in the small intestine. It is naturally present in foods such as bananas, potatoes, grains, pulses and seeds. When resistant starch reaches the large intestine, it is fermented by bacteria to produce short chain fatty acids. These are metabolised by colonic cells and encourage healthy function of the large intestine. As a result, it is thought that resistant starch may lower the risk of colorectal cancer and other diseases.

## The importance of fibre:

There is strong evidence to show that consuming enough fibre:

Reduces the risk of contracting certain chronic diseases, including:

- ✓ Cardiovascular Disease (heart disease & stroke)
- ✓ Type 2 Diabetes
- ✓ Colorectal (bowel) Cancer

Increases beneficial bacterial populations in the digestive tract (known as 'gut flora').

Increases satiety, helps with weight maintenance & helps to control symptoms of Irritable Bowel Syndrome, such as constipation.

## The recommended daily intake of fibre differs depending on age:

- ✓ 2 to 5 year olds: About 15g
- ✓ 5 to 11 year olds: About 20g
- ✓ 11 to 16 year olds: About 25g
- ✓ 17+ year olds: About 30g

## Where is fibre found?

Fibre is found within a variety of foods, including:

- ✓ **Wholegrains:** Whole wheat pasta, Brown rice, Bulgur wheat, Wholegrain breakfast cereals (Weetabix, muesli, bran flakes, Shredded Wheat), Wholegrain bran & Oats (porridge, oatcakes), Barley & Rye (crackers)
- ✓ **Wholemeal/granary breads** or higher fibre white bread for families that prefer white bread
- ✓ **Fruit & Vegetables:** Apples, Avocados, Carrots
- ✓ **Pulses:** Beans, Lentils, Chickpeas
- ✓ **Nuts & Seeds:** Hazelnuts, Peanuts, Flax seeds
- ✓ **Potatoes with skin:** Baked potato, Boiled new potatoes

## Fibre content of everyday foods:

**Wholemeal bread: 7.0g\***  
(Typical 40g serving: 2.8g)

**Wholewheat spaghetti: 4.2g\***  
(Typical 180g serving: 7.56g)

**Baked potato with skin: 2.6g\***  
(Typical 250g serving: 6.5g)

**Reduced sugar & salt baked beans: 4.9g\***  
(Typical ½ a can serving: 10g)

**Smooth peanut butter: 6.6g\***  
(Typical 15g serving: 0.99g)

\*Per 100g- Products referenced from McCance and Widdowson's 7<sup>th</sup> Edition