

Fitting in the Fiber

Wanda M. Koszewski, Extension Nutrition Specialist
Georgia Jones, Extension Food Specialist
Donnia E. Behrends, Extension Educator

Lesson Goal:

Participants will consume the recommended amount of dietary fiber each day by eating fiber-rich foods from MyPyramid.

Lesson Objectives:

After completing this lesson, participants will be able to:

- identify three benefits of consuming the recommended amount of dietary fiber each day.
- identify the two types of dietary fiber.
- list three ways they can increase their dietary fiber intake based on each of the MyPyramid food groups.
- identify the amount of fiber in a food using the Nutrition Facts label.

Leader Resources:

- Elder Nutrition and Food Safety (ENAFS), University of Florida Extension
Web site: enafs.ifas.ufl.edu
- Eat Right for Life, University of Florida
To order curriculum, contact Kimberly Klinger by phone, (352) 846-2770 ext. 309, or email, Kimby@ufl.edu.
- Nutrition News: Information for Senior Citizens, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension
Web site: www.seniormealsonwheels.org/pdfs/Januarynutritioninfo2008.pdf
- Fiber Fact Sheet, University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension, Nutrition Education Program
Web site: nebraskanep.unl.edu/nep/images/pdf/nep_fact_sheets/fiber_en.pdf
- Dietary Guidelines for Americans, United States Department of Agriculture

Web site: www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/dga/dguide95.html

- MyPyramid
Web site: www.mypyramid.gov

Before the Class:

Read the lesson materials and review accompanying PowerPoint® presentation.

At the Class:

1. Introduce yourself and your lesson topic.

Ask Participants: “Can anyone guess how much fiber a cow eats in a day?”

Tell Participants: “You may be surprised to know that dairy cows eat about 15 pounds of fiber each day!”

Ask Participants: “Now, can anyone guess how much fiber an average person eats in a day?”

Tell Participants: “On average, we eat about 13 grams of fiber each day, even though we should eat about twice that amount. If you were wondering how 15 pounds compares to 13 grams, it’s over 500 times as much fiber! Now, let’s find out why fiber is important to us and what foods we can eat to get more fiber in our diets.

2. Review Objective #1: Identify three benefits of consuming the recommended amount of dietary fiber each day.

Background information:

A well-balanced diet, rich in fiber, is an important part of healthy living. Fiber is found in plants. It helps regulate bowel movements, makes us feel full, lowers blood sugar and cholesterol, and may reduce the risk of getting certain types of cancer (specifically colon and breast cancer). The amount of fiber you need depends



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on your gender and age. On average, most adults should eat 25 to 35 grams of dietary fiber every day.

3. Review Objective #2: Identify the two types of dietary fiber.

Background Information:

There are two types of dietary fiber, soluble and insoluble. Neither soluble fiber nor insoluble fiber are digested by our bodies.

Insoluble fiber is also called “roughage” or “bulk” and does not dissolve in water. Insoluble fiber passes through our intestines largely intact. The main job of insoluble fiber is to keep your intestines healthy by reducing the amount of time that food is in them. If food sits in intestines too long, it can cause constipation. Foods containing insoluble fiber are wheat bran, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables.

Soluble fiber forms a gel when mixed with liquid. Soluble fiber may be helpful in removing cholesterol from the blood. Lowering cholesterol can reduce your risk for heart disease. Foods containing soluble fiber include dried beans, peas, lentils, oats, barley, fruits, and vegetables.

4. Review Objective #3: List ways participants can increase their dietary fiber intake based on each of the MyPyramid food groups.

Interactive Activity: “How Much Fiber Do You Eat?”

You will need to obtain samples, models, or pictures of commonly eaten plant foods such as fruits, vegetables, cereals, breads, or beans.

Once you have the food examples, you will need a food values book or chart that lists the amount of fiber in specific foods (many Web sites offer this information). Find out how many grams of fiber are in each food example. Keep the values handy on the day of the activity. Also, a calculator will be helpful.

Instructions:

- Place the food examples in a basket or plastic container.
- Ask a participant to come to the front of the room. Tell the volunteer to pick the foods he/she might eat in one day. Make sure you tell them they will not be graded based on how many items they choose. This is only a game.
- Once the participant has chosen several items, have him/her sit down.
- Address one item at a time, and tell the group how many grams of fiber a typical portion contains. Ask participants to help you add the total grams of fiber for all the items selected.

- Compare the total to the daily recommended amount (25 to 35 grams of fiber each day). Ask the participant how he/she did. What changes could he/she make to increase their fiber intake?
- Ask for more participants so most of the food examples get selected.

Background Information:

Fiber can be found in nearly all MyPyramid food groups. An easy way to ensure that you are getting enough fiber in your diet is to eat foods from all the food groups.

Grain Group: Choose whole grains for half of your daily grain intake. Whole grains, like 100% whole wheat bread or cooked brown rice, are great sources of fiber. The average adult should consume 3 ounces of whole grains each day. Breakfast is a great time of day to get fiber. Many whole grain breakfast cereals are packed with fiber. To increase the amount of fiber you get from the grain group, enjoy a raisin bran muffin for breakfast or as a quick snack.

Vegetable Group: Vegetables also provide fiber in our diet. To get the most fiber, eat vegetables with their skin on (e.g., potatoes). When making a salad, choose romaine lettuce or spinach rather than iceberg lettuce. Eat 2½ cups of vegetables each day. To increase the amount of fiber you get from the vegetable group, try the Awesome Broccoli Marinara recipe.

Fruit Group: Eating fruit is a good way to include fiber in your diet. Berries are an especially great source of fiber. Try adding berries to a salad, to yogurt, or to cereal in the morning. When possible, enjoy fruit with the skin left on — the skin is packed with fiber. Choose dried fruit as a snack. Eat whole fruits instead of drinking 100% fruit juice. To increase the amount of fiber you get from the fruit group, try the Autumn Apple Salad recipe.

Meat and Beans Group: Legumes, such as dried beans, also provide fiber in your diet. Try using beans in a meatless meal at least once a week. Your meal will be both inexpensive and loaded with fiber. To increase the amount of fiber you get from the meat and beans group, try the Marinated Beans recipe.

5. Review Objective #4: Identify how to determine the amount of fiber in a food using the Nutrition Facts label.

Background Information:

Reading the Nutrition Facts label is a simple way to find out how much fiber is in the foods we eat each day. A “high fiber” food has 5 grams or more of fiber per standard serving. A “good source” of fiber has between 2 ½ and 5 grams of fiber per serving.