

Lunch at the Library's HEALTH TIP OF THE WEEK



This healthy tip of the week was adapted from "KidsHealth from Nemours," kidshealth.org/en/parents/strong-bones.html. For more tips, visit kernlibrary.org or kidshealth.org.

Fiber

What Is Fiber?

Fiber is a type of carbohydrate that the body doesn't digest (break down). Dietary fiber is found in plant foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and beans. Fiber can be soluble or insoluble: *Soluble fiber* dissolves in water. It helps lower cholesterol and improve blood sugar control. *Insoluble fiber* does not dissolve in water. It helps with constipation. Both kinds of fiber are important parts of a healthy diet.

What Are the Benefits of Fiber?

A diet high in fiber: helps prevent or relieve constipation, increases feelings of fullness, which may help with weight control, lowers cholesterol, helps prevent heart disease and diabetes, and may lower the chances of getting some types of cancer

What Are Good Sources of Fiber?

Foods that are naturally high in fiber, include: whole grains, such as 100% whole-wheat bread, brown rice, and oatmeal, cooked dried beans, such as black beans, lentils, and split peas, fruit and vegetables, and nuts and seeds. It is best for kids to get their fiber directly from foods rather than from pills or other supplements. Foods have nutrients and vitamins that are important for health. If your doctor recommends that your child take a fiber supplement, give it as directed.

Making Fiber Part of Your Family's Diet

Here are some tips to get more fiber in your family's diet:

- Read nutrition labels to find out how much fiber is in foods. Choose foods with 3 grams of fiber or more.
- Choose whole grains instead of refined grains. For example, try brown rice instead of white rice, or whole-grain pasta instead of regular pasta.
- Choose whole fruit instead of juice.
- Include fruit and vegetables with every meal. Aim for 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day.

To add more fiber to meals and snacks:

- Top yogurt, cereal, or oatmeal with fruit and nuts.
- Put veggies, like lettuce, tomato, or avocado, on sandwiches.
- Add beans to soups and salads.
- Add bran to baked goods.
- Offer air-popped popcorn, whole-grain crackers, fruit, or vegetables as healthy snack options.



Kern County Library
 661.868.0701
 info@kernlibrary.org
 kernlibrary.org
 @KernCountyLibrary
 @KernCountyLibrary
 @KernCntyLibrary
 @KernCountyLibrary

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