Adding Soluble Fiber to Lower Your Cholesterol
Advice from the National Lipid Association Clinician’s Lifestyle Modification Toolbox

What is Dietary Soluble Fiber?

Soluble fiber is a type of fiber found in plant foods. Because it is not absorbed in the intestine, soluble fiber can bind cholesterol in the intestine and remove it from the body. Eating 5 to 10 grams of soluble fiber a day can help lower total and LDL-cholesterol by 5 to 11 points, and sometimes more. To eat at least 5 to 10 grams of soluble fiber a day, choose many foods with 1 to 3 grams of soluble fiber each day. Be sure to drink more water when you increase your fiber intake.

Foods High in Soluble Fiber

Whole grains with 1 to 2 grams of soluble fiber in just ½ cup are cooked barley, oatmeal, oat bran, and quinoa.

Lean protein foods with 1 to 3 grams of soluble fiber per ½ cup include beans, like black-eyed peas; chick peas; and black, kidney, lima, navy, pinto, and soy beans.

Healthy fats with 1 or more grams of soluble fiber are 2 tbsp avocado, 1 tbsp whole chia seeds, and 2 tbsp ground flax seeds.

Vegetables with 1 or more grams of soluble fiber per ½ cup cooked or 1 cup raw are broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, green beans, okra, onions, parsnips, and turnips.

Starchy vegetables like sweet potatoes and green peas have 1 gram or more soluble fiber in ½ cup.

Fruits with 1 or more grams of soluble fiber are a medium apple, banana, guava, orange, peach, or pear; 2 apricots or plums; ½ mango; ¼ cup figs or dried apricots or 3 prunes; and 1 cup of raspberries, blackberries, or strawberries.

Eating Foods Rich in Soluble Fiber is Easy

For example, to eat at least 10 grams of soluble fiber in a day, try:

- **Breakfast** with 1 cup cooked oatmeal with berries and 2 tbsp ground flax (3 grams)
- **Lunch** with 1 cup chili made with beans and a pear for dessert (4 grams)
- **Snack** with ½ cup raw carrots and ¼ cup hummus (2 grams)

Once you get started, you’ll see that eating foods high in soluble fiber is a delicious way to lower your LDL-C.

A natural fiber supplement like psyllium, a plant seed powder, can also be taken. Start with a small dose mixed with water then slowly increase the dose, taking as directed. Drink extra water as you increase your daily fiber intake. Fluid needs vary, but 9 to 12 cups of fluid a day are recommended for most healthy people.

A registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) can help you make a heart-healthy meal plan that works best for your lifestyle and support you in your nutrition journey. Talk with an RDN for the answers to your nutrition questions.

This information is provided as part of the Clinician’s Lifestyle Modification Toolbox courtesy of the National Lipid Association.