



## **Control Fiber Facts: Gut Function, Heart Health, Blood Sugar**

Fiber is defined as the non-digestible portion of fruits and vegetables. It is also called bulk or roughage. Fiber has become a very popular term in the food industry due to the known health benefits.

These benefits include increased satiety or feeling of fullness, improved blood sugar control, decreased cholesterol levels and gastrointestinal health.

In our food supply you will find various forms of fiber. The two terms used are isolated fiber and intact fiber. Intact fiber refers to fiber that is naturally occurring within the food. This would include the fiber found in fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

Isolated fiber refers to fiber that has been removed from a natural food source, possibly changed in some way, and then added to another food. Isolated fibers are used to increase the fiber content of certain foods such as cereals, bars and yogurts. It is also used to improve the consistency and texture of certain foods such as desserts and ice creams.

Research has not shown that isolated fibers have the same effect as soluble and insoluble intact fiber on blood sugar control and cholesterol levels. It can aid in satiety or fullness and may also aid in bowel function.

### **Isolated Fiber Terms to look for on the nutrition label**

- Maltodextrin – starch from potatoes, corn, rice or wheat. Resistant maltodextrin has been altered by heat, enzymes or acid to prevent the breakdown in the digestive tract. It has no flavor or odor and can make sweeteners taste sweeter and more like sugar. It is used most often in desserts such as ice cream.
- Inulin – Natural fiber found in many foods such as leeks, bananas, onions, asparagus and chicory root. This is most often added to yogurts, breakfast bars, or sweeteners that contain added fiber.
  - Polydextrose- Additive that is made from dextrose, a type of sugar. Used most often in reduced calorie foods. Most likely will be found in puddings, gelatins, and low fat frozen desserts.
  - Oat Fiber
- Chicory Root Extract- same as Inulin

### **Intact Fiber**

Found in two forms:

- Soluble – helps to regulate blood sugar and lower cholesterol found in (oat bran, nuts, legumes, beans, sweet potatoes, oatmeal, peas, fruit, and vegetables
- Insoluble – Improve and regulate bowel function. Found in (whole grains, fruit and root vegetable skins, dark green leafy vegetables, seeds and nuts.

To learn more about whole grains and ways to add fiber to your diet contact a Registered Dietitian at the Wilfred R. Cameron Wellness Center, 724.250.5207:

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### The Dietitian's Pick for Cereals, Nutrition Bars and Grains

#### **Best Cereals**

Less than 12gm sugar per serving; 5 grams of fiber or more

General Mills Fiber One  
Kellogg's All Bran Original  
Nabisco Shredded Wheat  
Ralston Wheat Chex  
Kellogg's Bran Buds  
Post Grape Nuts

#### **Better Bars**

3-5gm fiber or more, 5-7gm protein or more and less than 5gm fat per serving (Certain flavors of each brand fit the requirement)

Kashi TLC Bars  
The Simply Bar  
NuGo Slim  
LaraBar  
Luna Bar

#### **Best Grains (whole grains)**

quinoa  
bulgur  
wheat berries  
whole wheat pasta  
brown rice/ wild rice  
spelt  
amaranth  
buckwheat  
millet  
oats/ oatmeal  
teff  
sorghum

### The Dietitian's Pick for Cereals, Nutrition Bars and Grains

#### **Quick Ginger Bran Muffins**

**Yield:** Makes 8

**Ingredients:** 3/4 cup bran cereal (flakes or another shape)  
1/4 cup unprocessed bran  
1 tablespoon vegetable oil  
1 tablespoon honey  
1 tablespoon molasses  
1/2 cup milk  
1 large egg  
1/2 cup whole-wheat flour  
1/2 teaspoon baking soda  
1/8 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon  
3/4 teaspoon ground ginger  
1/2 cup dried fruit such as raisins, cherries, or cranberries  
Cooking-oil spray

#### **Preparation**

1. Mix together both bran cereal and unprocessed bran with 1/4 cup boiling water in a large bowl. Let cool. In a small bowl, combine oil, honey, molasses, milk, and egg, then stir into bran mixture. Add flour, baking soda, salt, spices, and dried fruit and stir until just combined.
2. Spray a microwave-safe 1/2-cup bowl or ramekin with cooking spray and spoon in 1/4 cup batter. Microwave until muffin springs back when touched but isn't hard, about 45 seconds for a single muffin or 90 seconds for 4 muffins cooked together. Repeat with remaining batter.

**Nutritional Information** Note: Nutritional analysis is per muffin.

Calories: 128, Protein: 3.6g, Fat: 3.6g, Carbohydrate: 24g, Fiber: 4g, Sodium: 150mg

~Recipe adapted from [www.cookinglight.com](http://www.cookinglight.com)