



Dietary Fiber- How Much is Enough?

The most recent recommendations on dietary fiber intake come from the Institute for Medicine, the group that sets Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDAs) and the new Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs). These recommendations recommend adult women get 25 grams of fiber daily until age 50, when 21 grams is thought a reasonable goal. Men are advised to aim for 38 grams a day until age 50, when 30 grams of fiber is said to be adequate. At one time, experts suggested that children get an amount of fiber equal to their age plus five (a seven-year-old would aim for 12 grams of fiber). But the new recommendations call for higher levels for youth: 25 grams a day for ages four through eight, and 26 to 38 grams a day after that, depending on age and gender. Dietary fiber helps to keep the digestive tract functioning, control blood sugar and blood cholesterol, and reduce colon cancer risk. These new recommendations were set at the lowest level thought to offer heart disease protection. To achieve these goals, the plant-based diet advocated by the American Institute for Cancer Research is essential. This diet consists of several servings of whole grains and at least five (ideally seven to ten) servings of fruits and vegetables daily, as well as frequent use of dried beans, nuts, bran and other sources of fiber.

For more information on ways to increase your fiber intake, contact your local **Health and Wellness Center (HAWC)** or **Dietitian**.

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