

Digestive Health Constipation and Regularity

Are you struggling with not being regular?

If the answer is yes, you are not alone. Many Australians struggle with not being regular, and for many that can mean pain, bloating and generally feeling **BLAH!** In some cases, haemorrhoids can develop which are most uncomfortable.

Before you reach for the medication to get things moving, first give fibre a try... it's easier than you think.

How much fibre do I need?

25–30 grams per day

How much fibre is in common foods?

1 medium apple	3g
1 cup broccoli	3g
½ cup high fibre bran cereal	13g
2 slices wholemeal bread	4g
1 bowl oats	4g
½ cup lentils	4g
Handful of almonds	2g



30 grams sounds like a lot, how can I do it?

It's actually easy. Fibre comes from plant foods, so having a few more of these will do the trick.

Getting a balance of fibres from vegetables, fruit, grains, nuts, seeds and legumes (that's beans and chickpeas) or pulses (lentils) is the perfect way to get all the benefits.

Why do I need a balance of fibres? Can't I just focus on one?

All plant foods contain a combination of different fibres and there are three main types:

Soluble fibre: helps to control cholesterol and blood sugar levels. You find this type in fruit, vegetables and grains such as oats and barley. It can also be found in psyllium, legumes and seeds.

Insoluble fibre: these fibres move all the way down to the colon where they help to make your stool heavier and easier to pass. In other words, they help you go to the toilet. You find this type in the bran of grains and in fruit and vegetable skins.

Fermentable fibre: these fibres feed all the little bugs in the intestine, which helps to keep a balanced digestive system and produce compounds that protect your bowel. You find this type of fibre in legumes (beans and chickpeas), cooked cold potatoes, rice, cereal grains and onions.



How do I achieve good fibre balance?

Try to have these every day and you will have the balance just right.

- 2** serves of whole fruit, preferably with skin
- 5** serves of vegetables
- 4-6** serves of grains, preferably high fibre or whole grain
- 1** serve of nuts or legumes

Eat the above, together with a diet containing lean protein, some dairy and healthy fats.



1 serve = 1 medium banana, ½ cup berries, 1 medium apple



1 serve = ½ cup of cooked vegetables, 1 cup of salad greens, 1 medium carrot



1 serve = ½ cup cooked porridge, ⅔ cup of breakfast cereal, ½ cup brown rice, 1 slice wholemeal bread



1 serve = ½ cup cooked legumes, small handful of nuts

Did you know that **grain fibre** is the most effective for **promoting regularity**?

All the fibres are great, but did you know that grain fibres are the ones that are **the best for constipation and regularity**? That's right, research shows that insoluble fibre from grains, especially wheat bran, is more effective than fibres from other foods for going to the toilet – as it has the greatest stool bulking ability.^{1,4}

The insoluble fibre found in grains is like a scrubbing brush for your insides and works to make sure food moves quickly and easily through the digestive system.

So go with the **grain** every day.



Which grain foods contain insoluble fibre to help with regularity?

- High fibre breakfast cereals with bran
- Oats or muesli
- Wheat bran, rice bran or oat bran
- Bread or crackers made from whole wheat or rye
- Corn on the cob
- Wild rice or brown rice
- Quinoa, buckwheat, millet and amaranth

Corn, rice, quinoa, buckwheat, millet and amaranth are all gluten free whole grains



It may take a few days to get things moving, but keep going ... It will be worth it!

1 Pittaway et al. J Am Coll Nutr 2007; 26: 334-40.

2 Jenkins et al. J Am Coll Nutr 1998; 17(6): 609-16.

3 Lampe et al. Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev 1992; 1: 207-11.

4 Vuksan et al. Am J Clin Nutr 2008; 88: 1256-1262.

These fact sheets are not meant to replace dietary advice provided by your doctor or dietitian. Please consult with your doctor or dietitian before making changes to your diet or physical activity routine.