

All the fabulousness of fibre- April 2020

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What is the first thought that pops into mind when fibre is in the hot seat? A healthy, balanced diet? Feeling full up for longer? Let's not be shy; it's about keeping us regular!

Bowel habits are a dietitian's favourite topic (never go out for dinner with us) and in uncertain times it will be more of a focus than ever for many. Some individuals may be finding that, with increased anxiety levels, alterations to daily food routines and more couch time, constipation is creeping into their day to day.

However, ensuring our fibre intakes are adequate is not only about avoiding that blocked up feeling. As well as preventing and treating constipation, consistent and sufficient consumption of fibre can help to lessen the risk of many health conditions, such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and bowel cancer. Topping up on fibre also aids the reduction of blood cholesterol levels and blood pressure, and fills up our bellies with healthy hordes of bacteria.

But what actually is this fabulous fibre? Dietary fibre is an essential nutrient that comes from the edible parts of plants. It is resistance to digestion and absorption too far up the digestive tract, which gives it the green light to pass further down, allowing more time for its wonderful benefits.

Due to these perks, the UK target for adults increased to 30g per day in recent years. However, on average, grown-ups are falling short and only managing 18g on a good day. Despite their requirements being slightly lower, children and teenagers seem to have also missed this memo.

We are not entirely to blame though, as we are bombarded with processed, fibre- stripped foods left, right and centre. Increasing our intake of natural, wholesome products can really help; but what does this mean in food language?

Fruits and vegetables are a great starting point. Aiming for your 5-a-day from different types and colours will provide lots of extra fibre, as well as a whole host of immune boosting vitamins and minerals. This includes all fresh, frozen, tinned and dried options; however anything with the skin still on will keep extra fibre locked in. Fruit juice will only provide a little fibre as often the pith is discarded and blending can damage the fibrous structures.

Another tip to top up on fibre is to ditch the refined carbohydrates and switch to wholegrain varieties; for example, swapping white versions to granary bread, wholemeal pitta, oats, wholegrain rice and breakfast cereals, and whole wheat pasta, cous cous and noodles. Clearly there are no 'wholemeal potatoes' gracing the supermarket shelves, but eating the skin will increase fibre content.

Protein sources can be a bit trickier, as options like meat, fish and eggs do not contain any fibre. However, when you prepare these foods bread crumbed, battered or with pastry as an occasional treat, using wholemeal flour and granary breads will up the ante. An easier and nutritious daily method for increasing fibre via protein foods is upping your usage of beans, pulses, nuts and seeds. For example, adding baked beans to brekkie, sprinkling nuts on top of cereal and stirring lentils into curries.

As 30g is a hefty target, optimising fibre- friendly foods when snacking can also put you on the path to success. Options like vegetable sticks with hummus, fruit slices and nut butter, oat based cereal bars, roasted chickpeas, plain popcorn and yogurt with linseed will get you a head start.

If packaging appears misleading, or leaves your head feeling fuzzy, turn over to the nutritional list or table. A source of fibre will contain at least 3g fibre per 100g, whilst high fibre products will be 6g or over per 100g.

For most us, fibre is a really important dietary focus. However, make sure you increase it gradually to allow your gut time to adjust. Additionally, it can only work effectively with adequate fluid levels; so keep sipping and remember to aim for 8-10 cups of fluid per day at regular intervals.

Although these adjustments may seem miniscule, they soon add up! Substituting a bowl of rice krispies for porridge topped with raspberries and chopped Brazil nuts will increase fibre from 0g to 10g. Additionally, replacing white fusilli and pesto with whole wheat spaghetti and lentil bolognaise will bump up the fibre from 4g to 18g.

Therefore, increasing your fruit and veg, adding in beans, pulses, nuts and seeds at every opportunity and switching over to wholegrains will bring that 30g fibre per day within reach.



Fruits, vegetables, wholegrains, beans, pulses, nuts and seeds are all examples of fibre containing foods

Local Treat: Over 100 years of baked goods

Whilst adjusting to new daily routines and eerie, empty high streets, there has been something very comforting about continuing to see the Dorringtons shop fronts opening for business as usual.

Dorringtons have been working tirelessly to support our local community; from starting a click and collect service, local home deliveries, selling staple ingredients (such as flour and fresh yeast), and providing trays of delicious jam doughnuts to exhausted NHS staff.

Although my purchases have become slightly more sophisticated from the ice buns and chocolate chip cookies of my childhood (most of the time), I have appreciated being able to continue a life-long, weekend routine of popping down to my local bakery on a Saturday morning.

For many years now, I have left clutching my multiseed loaf wrapped up tightly in its familiar, green and white striped paper bag. Their speciality multiseed bread is jam packed with oats, rye flour and sunflower, pumpkin and linseeds. Therefore, it makes the ultimate fibre-filled addition for your sandwiches, eggs on toast, breadcrumb toppings and homemade croutons. The sliced loaf also freezes brilliantly if you've got any space left!

Thank you to all of night staff in the bakery individually placing every button onto each gingerbread man, drivers delivering sweet and savoury treats and employees standing, smiling behind countertops.

Dorringtons has been baking since 1919 and, even from 2 meters away behind an orange line; they are still here for us all now.



Recipe: Alex's Multiseed Croutons

Homemade croutons are a great way to use up your leftover wholegrain or granary bread slices, and for adding an extra crunch into soups and salads.

1. Heat the oven to approximately 200C/ fan 180C/ gas mark 6
2. Save any leftover or stale bread
3. Cut or rip the bread into your desired shape and size
4. Add the croutons into a baking tray
5. Lightly coat with olive or rapeseed oil (you could use an infused oil if desired)
6. Add any extra flavours (for example herbs, spices, black pepper, chilli flakes, crushed garlic, pesto, cinnamon, sun-dried tomato or olive tapenade)
7. Mix together and spread the croutons out in a single layer
8. Bake for approximately 10 minutes, turning a few times throughout
9. Use straight away or, once chilled, store in an airtight container (they can usually last for 1-2 weeks)
10. Alternatively, freeze your croutons for later use

