

# Fill Up with Fiber Presentation Guide

## HANDOUTS

- What is a Whole Grain
- Food Labels
- Fiber in Foods List
- Fill Up with Fiber Worksheet
- High Fiber Recipe (optional)
- Fiber Facts: Frequently Asked Questions

## SUPPLIES

- > ½ cup size measuring cup
- > 1 apple or orange
- > Copies of handouts for participants

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## 1. WHAT IS FIBER AND WHY DO I NEED IT?

Good morning. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. Welcome to *Fill Up with Fiber*.

Today I'm going to help you understand what fiber is, why it's important to your health, how much fiber we need, and where to find it... So, why are we here talking about fiber?

Fiber's the new *hot topic* in the news today. Fiber is hot! Everywhere we look it is being added to juices, yogurt, breads and cereals.

*[Ask the audience]*

So, why is there so much interest in fiber? Why do you think fiber is good for your health?

*[Discuss]*

*[After they answer]*

Thank you. Those are some really good ideas you have about the health benefits of fiber. Let me share some additional thoughts *[Fill in with anything missed from list below]*

- It keeps you regular.
- It may lower the risk of certain cancers and heart disease.
- It fills you up, which helps prevent overeating.
- It helps with digestion.
- It can help control blood sugar in people with diabetes.



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In addition to all of these health benefits, a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, all high fiber foods, is lower in fat and higher in vitamins and minerals than a low fiber diet.

Are you convinced yet that fiber is important?

What exactly is fiber?

Dietary fiber comes from plants. It's found in fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts, seeds and whole grains. Fiber is also known as roughage or bulk. It is not found in meat or dairy.

## 2. HOW MUCH FIBER DO I NEED?

Most people aren't sure how much fiber they need. On the average, an adult woman (age 19-50) needs **at least 25 grams** of fiber and the recommendation for adult men is even higher, at **38 grams** of fiber. (Source: Dietary Reference Intakes)

And most of us are eating only half the recommended amount!

So, how can we get our daily fiber requirement? Here are some general recommendations:

1) *Focus on eating more fruits and vegetables* — The more the better:

- Adult women should eat at least **2½ cups of vegetables** per day. What does this look like? [*Hold up a ½ cup measuring cup.*] Half a cup is about a “handful”, so 2½ cups is equal to about 5 handfuls.
- Adult males should eat at least **3 ½ cups of vegetables** per day. Vegetables have about 2-4 grams of fiber per ½ cup serving.
- Adult women and men (age 19-50) should eat **1 ½ - 2 cups of fruit** per day. That's equal to about 2-3 whole fruits a day. [*Hold up a piece of fruit*] Fruits have about 2-4 grams of fiber per ½ cup serving. Some fruits, like prunes, have even more fiber, containing 6 grams per serving.

2) *Focus on getting half of your grains as whole grains.* We need six servings of grains per day, so at least three should be whole grains such as ½ cup brown rice, 1 slice of 100% whole wheat bread, or 1 cup of whole grain cereal. Whole grains have approximately 4-6 grams of fiber per serving.

3) *Try to eat more beans and peas like pinto, black, kidney, and lentil, as well as nuts and seeds*—at least 1-2 times per week. Depending on the type, they have about 5-8 grams per ½ cup serving.

Fiber needs are based on age, size, and gender. Children and older adults need less fiber than younger adult men and women. You can find your own personal nutrition recommendation at the website [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov).

### 3. WHAT IS A WHOLE GRAIN?

One good source of fiber is whole grains. But what's a whole grain?

*[Pass out **What is a Whole Grain** handout]*

Let's take a look at this drawing. It shows that grains are made up of three parts: the bran, the germ, and the endosperm. The bran is the protective outer shell. It contains fiber and B vitamins. The endosperm is the middle layer that contains mostly starch, some protein, and some vitamins and minerals. The germ is the small, nutrient rich core of the grain. It contains antioxidants, Vitamin E, B-vitamins and healthy fats. Whole grain foods contain all three parts—even after they are ground up or processed—while refined or enriched flour or grain contains only the starchy endosperm.

Whole grains are the perfect nutritional package. They contain the fiber, protein, carbohydrate, vitamins, minerals and more that are essential for good health. And if it's not a whole grain food, some part of the grain has been removed and you're missing fiber and healthy nutrients.

Below the drawing of a whole grain is a list of names for whole grains that you could see on a label.

*[Ask the audience]*

Would someone like to read this list of whole grains to the rest of us?

*[Point to "Choose foods" section of the handout]*

*[After a volunteer reads the list]* Thank you. These are the names of whole grains to look for.

Now, let's look at names that might fool you. *[Point to "Foods labeled" section of the handout]*

A lot of names on labels *sound* like they are whole grains and many people think they *are* whole grains, but usually they are not. We can all read together the names of ingredients that are usually not whole grain. *[Read list aloud as a group]*

Any surprises? *[Discuss]*

*[After the discussion]*

Names like "multigrain" and "stone ground" are not whole grains unless they also say "whole."

#### 4. WHERE DO I FIND WHOLE GRAINS?

*[Ask the audience]*

How do you know if you are buying a whole grain product? *[Wait for responses]*

*[If someone says, read the labels....]* That's right! You have to read the nutrition label.

The best way to identify a whole grain food is to look at the ingredients list on the package. Make sure that the first ingredient is a "whole grain," such as the ones we just read from this list: *[point to "Choose foods..." list on **What is a Whole Grain** handout]*

And also check the Nutrition Facts for the amount of fiber.

*[Pass out **Food Labels**]*

Now let's take a look at these product labels.

##### **Nabisco Whole Wheat Ritz Crackers Label**

*[Hold up Ritz Crackers label]*

Here's a prime example of a product that is being marketed to us as whole grain and high in fiber. But is it really high in fiber? And is it really a good source of whole grain?

Let's look at the label. We know that whole grain products have whole grains listed first.

*[Ask the audience]*

What is the first ingredient here? *[Unbleached enriched flour.]*

And the second ingredient is "whole grain wheat flour." So that's where the claim of 5 grams of whole grain on the front of the package comes from! *[Point to the front of the package]*

Be careful! The label doesn't say "5 grams of fiber." That's because "fiber" and "whole grains" are not the same. Remember, we need to look at the Nutrition Facts on the label.

*[Ask the audience]*

How many grams of fiber are in one serving of Whole Wheat Ritz Crackers? *[<1 gram]*

So, should this product be considered high fiber? *[No!]*

### **Kellogg's Raisin Bran Label**

*[Hold up Raisin Bran and Trix labels and ask the audience]*

If you look at the Trix label and the Raisin Bran label, which one lists a whole grain as the first ingredient? *[They both do]*

Yes, but which one **also** has a high fiber content? *[Raisin Bran!]*

And what is that whole grain? *[Whole wheat]*

How much fiber is in a serving of Raisin Bran? *[7 grams]*

So, as it says right on the package, Raisin Bran truly is an "excellent source of fiber."

### **General Mills Trix Cereal Label**

Now let's look at the Trix Cereal label.

*[Ask the audience]*

What is the first ingredient in Trix? *[Whole grain corn]*

How much fiber does it contain? *[1 gram of fiber per serving]*

Is Trix a good choice for a high fiber cereal? *[No]*

No, Trix is not a good choice for high fiber, even though it has a whole grain listed as the first ingredient. This can be confusing! You may need to do some detective work to see what you are really getting. Also, you want to look at *all* the ingredients. For example, does it have trans fats? Is it high in sugars?

There are a lot more products on the market today that meet the recommendation of "whole grains as the first ingredient." However, many products that claim to be "whole grain" contain only a small amount of whole grains and also include refined grains. Be sure to check the label to make a smart choice.

## **5. HOW DO I GET ENOUGH FIBER?**

*[Pass out **Fiber in Foods List** and **Fill Up with Fiber Worksheet**. Hold up **Fiber in Foods List**.]*

Remember when I said that fiber comes from plants, and can be found in fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts, seeds—as well as whole grains? Let's take a look at the **Fiber in Foods List** to find out how many grams of fiber are in some common foods.

Your daily target is to eat at least 25 - 38 grams of fiber. Use this list, along with your **Fill Up with Fiber Worksheet**, to get your daily fill of fiber!

On your **Worksheet**, write down foods for breakfast, lunch, dinner and a snack, along with the grams of fiber in each food. Then add up your total fiber for the day, and fill it in at the bottom. You may need to make some adjustments to the foods you choose to get up to 25-38 grams of fiber!

Try to choose foods that you really think you'll eat from the **Fiber in Foods List**. Be realistic, and include things you like. You're probably eating some of these foods already.

As you look at the list, you may notice that fiber does not come from meat, fish or dairy products.

*[Ask the audience]*

Before we start, do you have any questions about this exercise? *[Answer questions that relate to completing the Worksheet.]* Please take a few minutes to fill out the Worksheet....

*[Give participants five minutes to complete the Worksheet.]*

*[Ask the audience]*

- How was that exercise? *[It's hard to get to 25-38 grams, isn't it?]*
- Will someone share what you came up with? How did you fill up your day? *[Have a volunteer read their Worksheet aloud.]*
- Did anyone notice what group of foods had the highest amount of fiber? *[Answer: beans]*

It's not about eating more food to get enough fiber. The key is to choose foods differently, and substitute high fiber foods whenever possible. Simple tradeoffs are the best.

*[Ask the audience]*

What are some easy ways you can get more fiber into your diet? *[Discuss]*

*[After they answer, read the list below]:*

- Eat whole fruits instead of drinking fruit juices.
- Replace white rice, bread, and pasta with brown rice and whole grain products.
- Choose whole grain cereals for breakfast.
- Snack on raw vegetables, fruit or popcorn instead of chips, crackers or chocolate bars.
- Substitute beans, peas or lentils for meat 2 to 3 times a week.
- Try to eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables every day. Include skins and peels when you can because they have a lot of fiber.
- Strive to make half your grains whole.

## 6. SUMMARY

You've learned today that good sources of fiber are fruits and vegetables, beans, peas, nuts, seeds and whole grains.

You've also learned that you should be getting at least 25-38 grams of fiber daily; and we know most Americans are getting only half that amount.

To help you get the other half, we've got a recipe with high fiber foods for you to make at home.

Try something new; add a new grain or a fruit or vegetable to your normal routine.

*[Pass out **Recipe**]*

We've heard a lot today. We know we have to make some changes!

*[Ask the audience]*

What are some changes you will make for you and your family?

Thanks so much for your attention. Have fun *Filling Up with Fiber!*