

High Fiber Foods

Consider these fiber rich foods as part of your healthy diet



Fiber is important to our bodies for a variety of reasons. It keeps things moving -- literally -- through our digestive systems and helps cut cholesterol and even reduces cancer risk. So, what are some of the high fiber foods that should be part of every diet?

- * Whole oats or oat bran
- * Yams and sweet potatoes (did you know the humble sweet potato is one of the most nutritionally perfect foods?)
- * Apples (with skin)
- * Pears
- * Bran cereal (try "All-Bran" for low sugar options)
- * Lentils
- * Black Beans
- * Avocado
- * Grapefruit
- * Berries
- * Kale
- * Spinach
- * Brown rice
- * Flax seeds
- * Kidney Beans
- * Whole wheat products
- * Broccoli
- * Barley
- * Dried figs
- * Cooked peas
- * Air-popped popcorn
- * Chickpea flour

More Foods to avoid

What Not to Eat

While there are lots of great healthy foods, it is important to know the foods to avoid for good health. Some of the top food products you should avoid or eat only in very small quantities include:

* **Margarine and Shortening:** These carriers of partially hydrogenated oils are full of [trans fat](#), lowering your good cholesterol and raising the nasty kind.

* **Refined Sugars:** I know, I know. I love sugar as much as the next girl, and if I can't have artificial sweeteners, I want my sugar back. However, remember that refined sugar has little redeeming value in your day's nutritional makeup. Try reducing the amounts you use and experiment by sweetening foods with fruit juice, agave nectar, brown rice syrup and stevia instead.

***Deep Fried Anything** Crispy, crunchy, flavorful... and packed with fat you really don't need.

Then, there are foods that can be dangerous or just fine, depending on where you get them and what is in them.

For example, coffee is just fine, as long as you drink it in moderation. Even a latte is fine, especially if you go for non-fat or low fat milk. But, some of the specialty coffee drinks you can purchase are laden with fat, sugar and other additives.

A tall (that's the small size!) Starbucks Caffe Mocha - with whipped cream packs 340 calories and 19 grams of fat (12 of which are saturated). It also has 33 grams of carbs and 26 grams of sugar.

Artificial sweeteners and weight gain

Can your diet sodas make you fat?

Part of healthy eating is knowing what NOT to eat. Many people have replaced sugar in their diets with artificial sweeteners such as nutrasweet (aspartame) and saccharin.

However, as usage becomes more mainstream, we are hearing more and more about artificial sweeteners and none of it is good. Several recent studies have shown that the artificial sweeteners fool the body into thinking it is consuming sugar, potentially slowing metabolism and also confuse the body's satiety, so people who consume artificial sweeteners actually eat more than those who consume sugar.

Inner Idea has a [summary](#) of some recent studies that were written up in Behavioral Neuroscience, which is published by the American Psychological Association (APA).

These studies added more credence to concerns about artificial sweeteners causing weight gain.

Other studies have raised concern about kidney damage and other health issues that may be caused by these non-natural sweeteners.

Is it nuts to eat nuts?

Are nuts healthy or not?

The problem with nuts is that there is conflicting information out there. Some sources say they are incredibly healthy and should be part of every diet. Others point to them as diet-busters because of their high calorie and fat content. So, what is the real deal?

The truth is that nuts are both - they pack a lot of punch in nutrients, protein and anti-oxidants. However, they are high in fat. While the fat they contain is usually the more heart healthy variety, too much fat isn't good in any form.

So, the real answer is nuts are a great part of your eating plan - in moderation! If they are the primary source of fat in your diet, replacing butter or trans fats, then you are probably using them in a very healthy way.

Also be aware of things that nuts come with - often, they are heavily salted, sugared or combined with other ingredients that take down their "health quotient". So, eat pure, roasted nuts as a small portion of your diet!



Bread that doesn't have high fructose corn syrup

I recently read a [blog](#) where she discussed how hard it is to find bread without high fructose corn syrup. No kidding! If you read the labels in the bread aisle at your local grocery, most of them are filled with high fructose corn syrup as well as nasty fats, chemicals and other preservatives. Whatever happened to things like flour and yeast in bread?

But, don't despair - there are a few companies actually making bread that isn't filled with high fructose corn syrup and other things on your "avoid" list:

Ezekiel bread: While hard to find in some areas, Ezekiel offers a whole line of natural, wholesome breads.

Oroweat 100% whole wheat: Not all the Oroweat breads are free of HFCS, however this one is and it is hearty without being "chunky and dry".

Nature's Pride: Nature's Pride offers several wheat and whole wheat blend breads without high fructose corn syrup. These are satisfying, good basic breads that even the kids will eat.