

Nutrition Notes

FALL 2024

Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

Serving Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence,
Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton Counties in Ohio

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Fiber Fabulous

Fiber is an essential component of a healthy diet, playing a vital role in digestive health and overall well-being. It is a type of carbohydrate that the body cannot digest, which means it passes through the digestive system largely intact. This characteristic of fiber allows it to have great health benefits.

Health Benefits of Fiber

One of the most significant benefits of dietary fiber is its ability to promote digestive health. It helps to regulate bowel movements, preventing constipation and maintaining overall gut health. Additionally, fiber can help maintain stable blood sugars. This makes it particularly beneficial for individuals with types of diabetes.



Furthermore, a high-fiber diet is associated with a lower risk of developing heart disease. Soluble fiber, in particular, can help lower cholesterol levels by binding to cholesterol in the digestive system and removing it from the body. Studies have shown that consuming adequate fiber can also aid in weight management by promoting feelings of fullness, which reduces how much one may eat.

Recommended Fiber Intake

The recommended daily intake of fiber varies by age and gender. For adult women, the guideline is about 25 grams per day, while men are advised to consume around 38 grams; however, after age 50, these recommendations decrease slightly to 21 grams for women and 30 grams for men. It's essential to meet these daily recommendations to reap the maximum health benefits.

Tips for Increasing Fiber Intake

Incorporating more fiber into your diet should be done gradually to avoid digestive discomfort.

Here are some tips:

1. **Start Slow:** Increase fiber intake gradually over several days. This allows your digestive system to adjust without discomfort.
2. **Choose Whole Grains:** Look for whole grain products, such as whole grain bread, brown rice and oatmeal, instead of refined grains.
3. **Fruits and Vegetables:** Include a variety of fruits and vegetables in your meals. Aim for whole fruits

(continued on Page 2)

Fiber...continued from Page 1

rather than juices to benefit from the fiber content.

4. Legumes: Beans, lentils and peas are excellent sources of fiber. Throw them in salads, soups or stews to increase the fiber in your recipe.
5. Snack Smart: Replace processed snacks with high-fiber options like nuts, seeds or whole grain crackers.

Importance of Water Intake

As you increase your fiber intake, it's crucial to drink adequate fluids. Fiber absorbs water, which helps to soften stool and promote regularity. Insufficient water intake, on the other hand, can lead to digestive issues such as bloating or constipation.

High-Fiber Foods

Many foods are rich in fiber, including:

- Fruits: raspberries, pears and apples
- Vegetables: broccoli, carrots and Brussels sprouts
- Whole Grains: quinoa, barley and whole wheat pasta
- Legumes: lentils, chickpeas and black beans
- Nuts and Seeds: chia seeds, almonds and flaxseeds

The Nutritional Benefits of Sweet Potatoes

Sweet potatoes are a nutritional powerhouse, packed with vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Rich in beta-carotene, they are an excellent source of Vitamin A, which supports eye health and supports the immune system. They also provide significant amounts of Vitamin C, potassium, and B vitamins, making them a well-rounded choice for a healthy diet. The high fiber content helps with digestion as well. Sweet potatoes are typically in season from late Summer through early Winter, making Fall the perfect time to enjoy this versatile vegetable. When selecting sweet potatoes, look for ones that are firm, smooth, and free from bruises or soft spots. Choose medium-sized potatoes for optimal sweetness and flavor.

Recipe: Creamy Twice-Baked Sweet Potatoes

Prep Time: 15 Minutes / Cook Time: 60 Minutes / Yield: 2 Servings

Ingredients:

- 2 medium sweet potatoes (about 10 ounces each)
- 2 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 Tablespoon brown sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 Tablespoons chopped pecans

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375°. Scrub potatoes; pierce several times with a fork. Bake on a foil-lined baking sheet until tender, 45-60 minutes. Cool slightly.
2. Cut off a thin slice from top of each potato. Scoop out pulp, leaving 1/4-inch thick shells. Mash pulp with cream cheese, brown sugar and cinnamon. Spoon into shells; return to pan. Top with pecans. Bake until heated through, 15-20 minutes.

Nutrition Facts: 1 stuffed potato - 297 calories, 16g fat (7g saturated fat), 32mg cholesterol, 100mg sodium, 36g carbohydrate (18g sugars, 4g fiber), 5g protein



(Recipe from tasteofhome.com)

Fall Vegetables to Enjoy and Quick Preparation Tips

As the leaves change and temperatures drop, Fall brings a bounty of nutritious vegetables that are perfect for cozy meals. Here are some seasonal favorites along with quick preparation tips and their health benefits.



1. Butternut Squash

Rich in Vitamins A and C, butternut squash is excellent for supporting immunity and promoting healthy skin. Simply peel, cube and roast it with olive oil and spices for a delicious side dish.

2. Brussels Sprouts

These mini cabbages are high in fiber, vitamins and antioxidants. For a quick preparation, trim the ends, halve them, and sauté in olive oil with garlic until tender and crispy.

3. Kale

A nutritional powerhouse, kale is loaded with Vitamins K, A and C. Toss raw kale into salads or quickly sauté it with olive oil and lemon juice for a flavorful side.

4. Carrots

Packed with beta-carotene, carrots are great for eye health. Roast them whole or cut into sticks and steam them for a quick, crunchy snack.

5. Beets

High in folate and fiber, beets support heart health. Roast whole beets or peel and slice them for a colorful addition to salads.

Quick Cooking Methods

Most Fall vegetables can be prepared quickly by roasting, steaming or sautéing. Roasting enhances their natural sweetness as well. These methods not only save time but also make healthy eating enjoyable during the Fall season. Incorporate these vibrant vegetables into your meals to enjoy their flavors and health benefits!

Chickpea Salad

Ingredients:

- 1 can chickpeas (15 oz), drained and rinsed
- 1/4 cup parsley, chopped
- 1 cucumber, diced
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 bell pepper, diced
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1/4 red onion, finely chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:

1. In a large bowl, combine chickpeas, cucumber, bell pepper, red onion, and parsley.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together lemon juice, olive oil, salt and pepper.
3. Pour the dressing over the salad and toss to combine.
4. Serve chilled or at room temperature.

This quick salad is not only high in fiber but also packed with vitamins and minerals, making it a nutritious addition to any meal.





Word Find

Find these words:

- Acorn Squash
- Artichokes
- Apples
- Beets
- Broccoli
- Brussels Sprouts
- Cabbage
- Carrots
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- Celery
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- Chili Peppers
- Eggplant
- Fennel
- Garlic
- Green Beans
- Kale
- Okra
- Onions
- Parsnips
- PawPaw
- Peppers
- Pumpkin
- Radishes
- Rutabaga
- Spinach
- Squash
- Sweet Potatoes
- Tomatoes
- Turnips
- Zucchini



Trualta Online Caregiver Resource

Did you know the AAA7 has an online caregiver resource for family caregivers that is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week? Our partnership with Trualta, a personalized, skills-based training platform for family members caring for aging loved ones living at home, provides this valuable support.

Trualta teaches caregivers skills in the comfort of their own homes through an online platform family caregivers can access on their computer or mobile device. Modules on the Trualta platform teach caregivers how to safely provide hands-on care, connect families with reliable support agencies, and offer information and video training from experienced professionals in a quick and easy format.

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