

Nutrition News

VOLUME 6, No. 8

A COMMUNITY NUTRITION PROGRAMS NEWSLETTER

April Cintron,
MS, RD

De'Shoin Friendship,
MPA, CFPP

Annrose Guarino,
PhD, RD

Heli Roy,
PhD, RD

Eat Vegetables, Move More: Vegetables are a Good Source of Fiber

Did you know that most Americans do not consume the recommended amount of dietary fiber? Are you concerned about meeting the recommended amount? Consider vegetables as a great source of dietary fiber. A diet high in fiber has many benefits to your health and can help reduce the risk of certain types of diseases.

Dietary fiber, which is found in the foods we consume, cannot be digested or absorbed. It consists of two types: soluble and insoluble.

Soluble Fiber

Soluble fiber can be dissolved in water. Research shows that soluble fiber lowers blood cholesterol and glucose levels. This can be helpful for individuals who have high blood lipids or for someone with diabetes and those at risk for diabetes. Vegetables, such as peas, beans, carrots and broccoli are good sources of soluble fiber, as well as oats, apples and citrus fruits.

Insoluble Fiber

Insoluble fiber cannot be dissolved in water. This type of fiber increases stool bulk and regulates bowel movements for a healthy digestive track. Many vegetables are good sources of insoluble fiber as are whole-wheat products and nuts.

The average American's intake of fiber is about 14 grams, which is considerably lower than the recommended amount. With some attention to the diet, people can consume adequate amount of dietary fiber as recommended by the USDA Dietary Guidelines 2005. These recommended amounts are determined by gender and age:

Gender	Grams of Fiber Per Day
Men ≤ 50	38
Men > 50	30
Women ≤ 50	25
Women > 50	21

Vegetables & Fiber – What are the benefits of eating a diet rich in fiber?

- **Helps foster a healthy digestive tract.** Since insoluble fiber is not digested or absorbed, it passes through the digestive tract, which helps to increase bulk in the stool and regulates bowel movements by preventing constipation. Soluble fiber, on the other hand, helps to maintain healthy colon bacteria.
- **May aid in weight loss.** Fiber can help you feel fuller longer. Also, high fiber foods, such as vegetables, are less “energy dense,” which means they have fewer calories for the same amount of food.
- **May reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes** by regulating blood glucose and by preventing spikes in glucose and insulin after meals.
- **May reduce the risk of developing heart disease** by lowering blood cholesterol.
- **May reduce the risk of colon cancer** by creating a healthy digestive tract.



LSU
AgCenter
Research & Extension



SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY
AGRICULTURAL
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
C E N T E R

Featured Vegetables – Which vegetables are a good source of fiber?

Most vegetables are good sources of fiber; however, some vegetables contain more than others.

- **Legumes (lentils, peas, beans)**
Contains 7-8 grams of fiber per serving (1/2 cup)
- **Potato with skin (medium size)**
Contains 5 grams of fiber per serving
- **Carrots**
Contain 3 grams of fiber per serving (1/2 cup)
- **Broccoli**
Contains 2 grams of fiber per serving (1/2 cup)

Vegetable	What to Look For	Storage & Prep	Great Uses
Legumes	Look for freshness – plump and vibrant in color. Frozen and dry are second best to freshness.	Fresh legumes must be washed thoroughly. Can be stored in a cool dry place for months. Once cooked, store in refrigerator or freezer in airtight container.	Boil and mash chickpeas to use in hummus. Make a hearty bean soup incorporating your favorite legumes.
Potato	Choose firm potatoes with no brown or green spots.	Store in a cool, dark place or in the refrigerator. Wash potato before cooking. Leave skin on for maximum nutrients.	Boil red potatoes in skin until tender and cut into quarters. Sautee quartered potatoes in butter, onions, and roasted garlic for a delicious side dish.
Carrots	Choose firm carrots with no blemishes and rich in color.	Carrots may be stored in a cool, dry place or in a perforated bag in the crisper of the refrigerator. Brush carrots rather than peeling to retain a high vitamin and natural sugar content. Cut carrots shortly before use to prevent overexposure to air.	Carrots are great at a party on vegetable trays for dipping or eaten as a nutritious snack. Sautee baby carrots in brown sugar and yellow mustard for a sweet dish!
Broccoli	Choose broccoli with tight, bright green florets and firm, bright green stalks. Avoid florets that are yellow because they will be tougher and less tasty.	Store broccoli in a cool, dark place in the refrigerator. It can be stored 2 days in the refrigerator crisper and 4 days unwashed in a plastic bag. Also can be frozen. Cut off bottom of stem before use.	Eat raw in a salad, or dip in your favorite salad dressing. Stir fry with other vegetables for an Asian flare, or use in a broccoli and cheese casserole for a great side dish that even children will love.

Resources:

American Institute for Cancer Research. *The Facts About Fiber*. Available at <http://www.aicr.org>. Accessed July 12, 2007.

MayoClinic. *Dietary Fiber: An essential part of a healthy diet*. Available at <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/fiber/NU00033>. Accessed July 12, 2007.

Visit our Web site: www.lsuagcenter.com

September 2007

Louisiana State University Agricultural Center
William R. Richardson, Chancellor
Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station
David J. Boethel, Vice Chancellor and Director
Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service
Paul D. Coreil, Vice Chancellor and Director

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

This material was partially funded by USDA's Food Stamp program. The Food Stamp program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income.

To find out more, contact your parish agent.