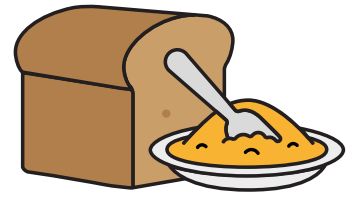


Fibre and incontinence





Fibre is a type of carbohydrate that helps keep our digestive system healthy.

- Fibre is the indigestible part of plant foods. Foods that are high in fibre include wholegrain breads and cereals, fruit, vegetables, beans, nuts, seeds and lentils.
- Fibre helps us feel fuller for longer, can improve cholesterol and blood glucose levels and can assist in preventing some diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and bowel cancer.

There are two types of fibre.

Both types are beneficial to the body and **most plant-based foods contain a mixture of both.**

Soluble fibre	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps to slow the emptying process in our stomachs, which helps us feel fuller.• Helps to lower cholesterol and stabilise blood glucose levels.	<p>Types of foods:</p>  <p>Fruits, oats, psyllium, vegetables, barley and legumes.</p>
Insoluble fibre	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keeps us feeling full. It is important to be well hydrated as insoluble fibre absorbs water to help soften the content of our bowels and support regular bowel movements.	<p>Types of foods:</p>  <p>Wholegrain breads and cereals, nuts, seeds, wheat bran, and skin of fruits and vegetables.</p>

★ Tip

The digestive system slows down with age, so a high-fibre diet becomes even more important.

We should aim to eat 25–30g of fibre every day to stay healthy.

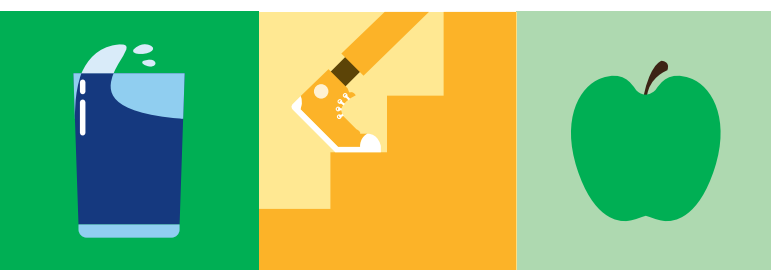
Most adults should be able to meet this recommendation by eating a varied diet in line with the Australian Dietary Guidelines. You should:
















1. Choose wholegrain, wholemeal and/or high fibre varieties of breads and cereals
2. Eat two serves of fruit and at least five serves of vegetables each day
3. Have legumes twice a week and a small handful of nuts/seeds most days

★ Tips to boost fibre intake

- Add chopped nuts or seeds to a bowl of porridge, yoghurt or to salads.
- Snack on traditional dried fruits such as prunes, figs, dates, sultanas, raisins and dried apricots.
- Add legumes (lentils, chickpeas or four-bean mix) to soups, stews and curries. This could replace half the meat.
- Swap white bread, rice and pasta for wholemeal or wholegrain varieties. Microwavable pouches of brown rice are a simple and quick option.
- Read the nutrition information panel on the back of packaged foods and pick the brand with the highest fibre content per serve.

Some of the content in this fact sheet is based on material provided by the National Health and Medical Research Council.



Sources of Fibre		
Food	Quantity	Fibre content
 Wholemeal pasta	1 cup (cooked)	7.9g
 Carrot (skin on)	1 cup	6.9g
 Kidney beans	100g	6.5g
 Corn	1 medium cob	5.9g
 Rolled oats	½ cup	4.5g
 Broccoli	1 cup	3.8g
 Sweet potato (skin on)	1 cup	3.7g
 Lentils	100g	3.7g
 Brown rice	1 cup (cooked)	2.7g
 Almonds	30g (25 pieces)	2.6g
 Dried apricot	10g (5 pieces)	2.5g
 Wholegrain bread	1 slice	2.4g
 Banana	1 medium	2.3g
 Apple (skin on)	1 medium	2.2g
 White bread	1 slice	0.6g

 **Tip**

Spread your fibre intake out over the course of the day and be sure to drink plenty of water to prevent constipation.

Example meal plan to meet fibre recommendations

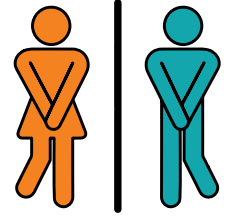
	Fibre content
Breakfast:	
½ cup rolled oats with milk	4.5g
1 medium banana	2.3g
Snack:	
1 medium apple	2.2g
Lunch:	
A sandwich using 2 slices of wholegrain bread	4.8g
<i>Note: If you include salad ingredients, you will get more fibre</i>	
Dinner:	
150g cooked salmon steak	
1 cup cooked brown rice	2.7g
1 cup cooked broccoli	3.8g
1 medium corn cob	5.9g
TOTAL	26.2g

 **Tip**

A sudden switch from a low-fibre diet to a high-fibre diet can create some stomach pain and increased flatulence (wind). **It is important to increase your fibre intake slowly and ensure you are drinking enough water.**

It is better to add fibre to your diet from food sources rather than from fibre supplements, as these can cause constipation if you don't drink enough water.

Incontinence



Incontinence is a common condition that has many causes.

As we grow older, problems with losing control of our bladder and bowel can increase. This involuntary loss of control is known as "incontinence". Many people feel embarrassed or ashamed to talk about these problems.

If you experience incontinence, it is important to remember that you are not alone. According to the Continence Foundation of Australia, almost five million Australians are affected by incontinence.

Urinary Incontinence

There are four main types of urinary incontinence:

1. **Stress incontinence** – leaking of small amounts of urine during activities such as laughing, coughing or jumping.
2. **Urge incontinence** – loss of urine resulting from a sudden and strong urge to go to the toilet.
3. **Overflow incontinence** – leaking of small amounts of urine from the bladder as a result of the bladder not emptying properly.
4. **Functional incontinence** – when physical or cognitive problems prevent you from getting to the toilet in time.

Signs of a healthy bladder:








- Urinating between four and six times per day, and once (or not at all) during the night.
- Urine that is usually pale yellow. Dark yellow or brown urine may indicate that you are not drinking enough water (dehydration).
- No accidental leaks.

Signs of a healthy bowel:

- Producing bowel motions between three times a day and three times a week.
- Having bowel motions that are soft and easy to pass with no straining required.

The Bristol Stool Chart

The Bristol Stool Chart shows seven categories of stool. The important thing is that your stools are soft and easy to pass – like types 3 and 4 below. Types 1–2 may indicate constipation and types 5–7 may indicate diarrhoea and urgency.

Type 1		Separate hard lumps, like nuts (hard to pass)
Type 2		Sausage-shaped, but lumpy
Type 3		Like a sausage, but with cracks on its surface
Type 4		Like a sausage or snake, smooth and soft
Type 5		Soft blobs with clear-cut edges (passed easily)
Type 6		Fluffy pieces with ragged edges, a mushy stool
Type 7		Watery, no solid pieces. Entirely Liquid.

Better bladder and bowel control

Remember to practice these five simple habits for better bladder and bowel control.

- 1. Eat well to prevent constipation and to maintain a healthy body weight.**
 - Eat a healthy diet high in fibre.
- 2. Drink well to prevent bladder irritability and constipation.**
 - Drink 1.5–2 litres of water daily, unless advised otherwise by your doctor.
 - Limit caffeine, alcohol and sugary drinks as they can cause bladder irritation.
- 3. Exercise regularly to help prevent constipation and maintain a healthy body weight.**
 - Keep active. Aim to exercise for at least 30 minutes on most, if not all, days of the week.
- 4. Keep your pelvic floor toned to maintain bladder and bowel control.**
 - Strong pelvic floor muscles can help with bladder and bowel control in men and women. A regular exercise program can help.
 - For a pelvic floor exercise brochure, phone the **National Continence helpline**.
- 5. Practice good toilet habits to prevent bladder and bowel control problems.**
 - Go to the toilet when your bladder feels full; don't get into the habit of going 'just in case'.
 - Empty your bowels when you get the urge; delaying it can lead to constipation.
 - Take time to completely empty your bladder and bowel.
 - When sitting on the toilet, your knees should be higher than your hips; lean forward with your elbows on your knees. You can place a small step or stool under your feet to help elevate your knees.



Tip

Bowel Cancer Screening

Around 80 Australians die of bowel cancer every week, but if detected early, up to 90% of cases can be successfully treated.

If you're aged 50–74 and have a current Medicare card or are registered as a DVA customer, you'll be sent a free bowel cancer screening kit. For more information visit: www.cancerscreening.gov.au

Individuals over the age of 74 are encouraged to speak with their doctor about screening options based on their individual circumstances.

There are a number of services to assist with the prevention and management of bladder and bowel problems:



National Continence Helpline

People can phone the National Continence Helpline on 1800 330 066 between 8.00am and 8.00pm, Monday to Friday. Helpline staff can provide information about continence products and subsidy schemes and provide information resources. www.continence.org.au



Bladder and Bowel website

The Australian Government's Bladder and Bowel website promotes bladder and bowel health. It also provides information about the prevention, management and treatment of bladder and bowel problems and the continence aids payment scheme. www.bladderbowel.gov.au



National Public Toilet Map website

The National Public Toilet Map website provides information on the location of public and private toilet facilities across Australia. www.toiletmap.gov.au