

The UConn Buzz



Fiber, An Important Part of a Healthy Diet

Most everyone has been told they need to eat more fiber but few of us know how much or what kind or WHY! March is National Nutrition Month®. Including adequate fiber in your diet is a key part of healthy diet.

Fiber, or **dietary fiber** is an edible carbohydrate that supports good health. Fiber is obtained from plants such as fruits, whole grains and vegetables. According to Dr. Joanne Slavin, a nutrition scientist at the University of Minnesota “You might think that if it’s not digestible, then it’s of no value. But there’s no question that higher intake of fiber from all food sources is beneficial.”(National Institutes of Health [NIH](#)).

There are two kinds of fiber: soluble and insoluble. Soluble fiber can be found in most fruits, peas, oats, beans. Insoluble fiber is found nuts, whole grains, vegetables and fruits. Both types of fiber are beneficial. The recommendation is that people eat a wide variety of foods that contain fiber. Specifically, the recommendation for men is to ingest 38 grams of fiber a day, and women about 25 grams. Most people consume much less dietary fiber than recommended.

Having an adequate amount of fiber can have important health benefits. These benefits include improved digestion, reduced risk for some cancers, and a reduce risk for diabetes.

In a study of 75,000 people over 14 years having a diet rich in fiber significantly reduced an individual’s risk for diabetes 2. ([NIH](#)) In the colon, fiber slows down the absorption of sugar, leading to a reduction of spikes in blood sugar, an important part of controlling or preventing diabetes.

A diet rich with dietary fiber is also associated with a reduction in cardiovascular

disease by lowering cholesterol, reducing blood pressure and plaque build-up. “There is evidence that high dietary fiber consumption lowers ‘bad’ **cholesterol** concentrations in the blood and reduces the risk for developing heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure,” says Dr. Somdat Mahabir, a nutrition and disease expert with NIH’s National Cancer Institute.

Fiber can help with maintaining a healthy colon. Fiber adds the needed bulk to the digestive system and reduces problems with constipation. Getting enough fiber in your diet may also reduces your risk for **colon cancer**.

The added bulk also helps you to feel full. “In studies where people are put on different types of diets, those on the high-fiber diets typically eat about 10% fewer calories,” Slavin says. Reducing unhealthy weight gain.

Getting Enough Fiber Can be a Challenge

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has information on how to [Eat More, Weigh Less? How to Manage your Weight without Being Hungry](#).

Here are some ways to “sneak” some more fiber in your diet:

- Start the day with a high-fiber cereal and top it off with fruit and nuts.
- Have bags of dried fruit and nuts available when you crave a snack.



- Make some beans. Try including more beans and peas into your meals.
 - Eat whole grain products such as whole grain past and bread.
- Source: NIH: [Wise Choices](#)

Another way to increase your family’s vegetables (therefore fiber) is to give dishes tasty name. According to the NIH, students chose dishes with interesting names more often than those with “healthy” names. Researcher’s tasty names included names that invoke excitement, gratification or geographic locations. You can get more information at: [Veggies Eating Boosted by Tasty Names](#).

Currently, there are many products on the market that contain added fiber such as granola, yogurt, and ice cream. According to the NIH, the fiber in these products is often contain isolated soluble fibers, such as inulin, polydextrose, or maltodextrin. These fibers may assist with digestive health but may not have the added benefits that whole food fiber does when it comes to reducing cholesterol.

Finally, when increasing fiber do so slowly so as to reduce the risk of bloating, gas and constipation. And don’t forget to drink plenty of water to aid in the benefits of dietary fiber. Fiber is important to maintaining good health. Don’t forget this important part of your diet.

For more information go to : [Rough Up Your Diet, NIH News in Health](#)

Sources: National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, Mayo Clinic & EHHH

HAPPENINGS AROUND TOWN

Cirque Flip Fabrique-"Blizzard", March 12 at 7:30 PM at Jorgensen Center Mansfield, CT.

Guaranteed chills for the entire family! Cirque Flip Fabrique brings a fresh take on contemporary circus, coupled with an uncanny ability to have fun and move an audience. With some of the most exciting circus performers of the moment and original music performed live.

Courthouse O'Putnam 5K, March 15, in Putnam.

Run the northeast corner of Connecticut in a fun 5K that starts and finishes in picturesque downtown Putnam. The loop course along the Quinebaug River finishes in front of the Courthouse Bar & Grille, where the post-race party tops off the Irish celebration. Costumes definitely encouraged!

Plunge at the Lake, March 21 at 9 AM in Coventry.

A Penguin Plunge event to raise money for the Special Olympics CT. To join in on the fun, Plungers need to raise a minimum of \$50. In addition to the awards for top fundraisers & best costumes. Penguins receive incentive prizes for their fundraising efforts

Walk at Church Farm, April 25 at 10 AM in Ashford.

Explore the new ledges trail at Ashford's Church Farm Preserve. Explore the approximately two mile trail through an upland forest with one of the properties stewards and a naturalist. Wonderful views of the Mount Hope River Valley and fascinating stone walls. Moderately challenging hills, wear sturdy shoes. Not suitable for younger children. Heavy rain cancels. Parking is on the right side of Varga Rd., just off Route 89.

Mystic Half Marathon and 10k, May 17 in Mystic.

Enjoy running a beautiful Connecticut coastal town at the Mystic Half Marathon and 10K. Experience 13.1 or 6.2 miles past historic ships, through the charming downtown and along the scenic shoreline. Enjoy a spectacular fan-filled finish line in front of Mystic Aquarium.



Baked Artichoke Casserole

INGREDIENTS (serves 4)

- 2 fresh artichokes 2 onions, sliced
- 2 T olive oil 1 tsp Italian seasoning
- 2 fresh tomatoes, sliced 6 oz Mozzarella cheese, sliced

How to prepare a fresh artichoke: Remove the outer three layers of leaves (starting from the bottom), and cut off the top 2". Slice off the remaining leaves and peel the bright green outer flesh from the stem. Place the artichoke stem up on a cutting board and slice from the top down into 8 pieces. Remove all traces of fuzzy 'choke' from each (8) heart pieces.

DIRECTIONS Prepare the fresh artichoke as directed above. Slice remaining 'hearts' 1/4 inch thick. Sauté onions in olive oil until tender (6—8 minutes). Place onion in the bottom of a 2 quart baking dish; sprinkle with seasoning. Top with tomato slices, artichoke slices and cheese. Cover and bake at 375° for 40 minutes. ENJOY!

Colorectal Cancer Screening Saves Lives

March is colorectal cancer awareness month. **Colorectal cancer** affects both men and women, and people of all racial and ethnic groups. It is the 2nd leading cause of cancer death among both genders and the 3rd most common cancer in the United States.

Occasionally an abnormal growth called a polyp may appear in the colon or rectum. Some polyps become malignant. When malignant cells form in the colon or the rectum, it is referred to as colorectal cancer.

Finding colorectal cancer in the early stages can make it easier to treat and reduce your chances of dying from the disease. There are various options for testing according to your age and risk level. The National Cancer Insti-

tute provides information about the screening tests and answers many common questions, **Screening**. The current recommendation by the **American Cancer Society** is people at average risk start regular screening for colorectal cancer at 45 years old.

Besides screening there are lifestyle changes that can reduce your risk for colorectal cancer:

- Stop smoking, (**Smoking Cessation**)
- Get regular physical activity. The recommendation is a minimum of 150 min per week & two days should include strength training.
- Limit alcohol intake
- Eat a healthy diet that includes lots of fiber from fruits, vegetables,

whole grains, and nuts.

Be proactive and stay informed about your risks for colorectal cancer and consult your medical provider about screening. Screening saves lives!

For more information go to : **Colorectal Cancer Alliance** or the **American Cancer Society**

Be Well is an employee wellness program provided through the Eastern Highlands Health District with funding from The CT Department of Health. The goal of the program is to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

