
HIGH FIBRE DIET FOR DIVERTICULAR DISEASE

Purpose: To provide a diet with 20 to 35 grams of appropriate fibre to promote regular elimination and increases faecal excretion.

Use: This diet can be used for the management of diverticulosis. The rationale for the increased fibre is that the increased bulk in the stool reduces the pressure on the colon, thus preventing further diverticular from forming.

Diverticulosis (the condition) and diverticulitis (the inflammation) are also called diverticular disease (notice the different endings, “itis” vs “osis”). Diverticula (the underlying cause of diverticula constipation: the pressure of straining produces pouches in the colon) are tiny pea-shaped pouches of weakness in the wall of the large intestine. This condition is called **diverticulosis** and is usually symptom free. Most people do not realise they have it. However, for a few people, diverticulosis results in spasms and pain.

If the diverticuli become inflamed, infected or ruptured, the condition is called diverticulitis. In other words, a person with diverticulosis may get diverticulitis when waste matter is trapped in a pouch and then becomes inflamed or infected.

The two major signs of diverticular disease are bleeding and infection.

The High Fibre Diet

Studies have shown that a balanced diet containing different kinds of fibre can help regulate the bowels, aid in the prevention of heart disease and protect against a number of health problems such as diverticulosis. Another way fibre contributes to good health is by helping to protect against cancer of the colon and rectum. Foods that contain fibre also tend to contain other cancer fighting nutrients, such as vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin E and selenium.

Dietary Guidelines

- Many people have the misconception they must avoid tiny seeds, grains, lettuce, and other high fibre containing foods for fear that the particles could lodge in the diverticular and cause inflammation. This has never been proven and in fact microscopic review of surgical specimens show this not to be the case. There is no reason to avoid such foods for fear they will precipitate disaster.
 - Foods such as nuts, popcorn hulls, and sunflower, pumpkin, caraway and sesame seeds should be avoided.
 - People differ in the amounts and types of foods they can eat. Decisions about diet should be made based on what works best for each person.
 - Scan food labels for bread and cereal products listing whole grain or whole wheat as the first ingredient.
 - Look for cooked and ready to eat cereals with at least 3 grams of fibre per serving.
 - Eat raw fruits and vegetables; they have more fibre than cooked or canned foods, or juice. Dried fruits (especially dried figs) are also good sources of fibre.
 - Increase fibre in meat diet by adding pinto beans, kidney beans, bleak-eyed peas, bran, and oatmeal.
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- Try adding 2-3 tsp. of unprocessed wheat bran to foods such as meatloaf, casseroles, homemade breads, muffins and other baked goods.
 - Dairy foods provide little fibre. Increase fibre by adding fresh fruit, whole-grain or bran cereal to yoghurt or cottage cheese.
 - Chopping, peeling, cooking, pureeing and processing may reduce fibre content.
 - Substitute oat bran for one third of all-purpose flour on baked goods recipes.
 - Best to eat a variety of foods and not rely on a fibre supplement.
 - Do it gradually – rapid fibre increase may result in gas, cramping, bloating, or diarrhoea.
 - Drink plenty of fluids – a high fibre diet requires lots of liquids. Fibre acts as a sponge in your large intestine – if you don't drink enough, you could become constipated. Try for at least 6 cups a day.

HIGH FIBRE DIET

Breads and grains 6-11 serves each day

- Breads, pastas, pizzas, pancakes, muffins, bagels, pita bread and muffins made with whole grain flours
- Whole-wheat and other whole-grain cereal products
- Buckwheat and stone-ground cornmeal
- Rye bread
- Whole wheat crackers or crisp bread
- Whole grain or bran cereal (Excellent high fibre choices are All-Bran, Sultana Bran, Bran Plus, Ultra Bran and Bran Buds)
- Oatmeal, oat bran, or grits
- Barley - dry
- Wheat germ
- Whole wheat pasta
- Brown rice

Vegetables 3-5 servings each day

All vegetables such as asparagus, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, greens such as beet greens, Swiss chard and turnip greens, green beans, green capsicum, onions, peas, potatoes with skin, Romaine, snow peas, green snap beans, pole beans, spinach, squash, sweet potatoes, turnips.

The seeds in tomatoes, zucchini, cucumbers, as well as poppy seeds, are generally considered harmless.

Fruit 2-4 servings each day

All fruits such as apples, apricots, bananas, blackberries, blueberries, cherries, dates, figs, grapefruit, nectarines, oranges, peaches, pears, pineapples, prunes.

The seeds in strawberries and raspberries are generally considered harmless.

Milk and Dairy 2-3 servings each day

All

Meat and Meat Substitutes 2-3 servings or a total of 170 grams daily

- All beans and peas such as aduki, garbanzo beans, black beans, baked beans, kidney beans, fava, lentils, lima beans, split peas, and pinto beans
- Smooth peanut butter and other smooth nut butters
- All meat, poultry, fish and eggs

Poppy seeds are generally considered harmless.

Fats and Snacks

- Whole wheat pretzels, baked tortilla corn chips or trail mix made with dried fruits
 - Cakes, breads, and cookies made with oatmeal or fruit
 - Bean dip
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