



High Fibre Diet for Children with Constipation

What is constipation?

- Having bowel movements less often than normal
- Hard, dry stools that may be difficult to pass
- Each child’s bowel habits are different, and may vary from day to day

What is fibre?

Fibre is a nutrient found in all plants. Unlike most nutrients, fibre is not digested by the body. Fibre helps keep stools soft and moving regularly.

Recommended daily fibre by age group:

Age and Sex	Daily Amount of Fibre
Girls and boys, 1 to 3 years	19 grams
Girls and boys, 4 to 8 years	25 grams
Girls, 9 to 13 years	26 grams
Boys, 9 to 13 years	31 grams
Girls, 14 to 18 years	26 grams
Boys, 14 to 18 years	38 grams

What to look for on food labels:

Nutrition Facts	
Valeur nutritive	
Per 125 mL (87 g) / par 125 mL (87 g)	
Amount	% Daily Value
Teneur	% valeur quotidienne
Calories / Calories 80	
Fat / Lipides 0.5 g	1 %
Saturated / satures 0 g	0 %
+ Trans / trans 0 g	
Cholesterol / Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium / Sodium 0 mg	0 %
Carbohydrate / Glucides 18 g	6 %
Fibre / Fibres 2 g	8 %
Sugars / Sucres 2 g	
Protein / Proteines 3 g	
Vitamin A / Vitamine A	2 %
Vitamin C / Vitamine C	10 %
Calcium / Calcium	0 %
Iron / Fer	2 %

When you look at a label, first, look at the serving size and compare that to how much your child will be eating.

- When looking at fibre on the label, focus on the amount in grams instead of the percentage.
- 6 grams of fibre or more is considered an excellent source of fibre.
- 4-6 grams of fibre is considered a good source of fibre.
- 2-4 grams of fibre is considered a source of fibre.

Suggested guidelines:

- Bread: At least 2 grams of fibre per slice
- Cereal: At least 4 grams of fibre per serving



Recommended Number of Food Guide Servings

Age	2-3 years of age	4-8 years of age	9-13 years of age	14-18 years of age
Vegetables & Fruit	4	5	6	7-8
Grain Products	3	4	6	6-7

Most fibre in our diet is obtained from vegetables, fruit and grain products. To help your child consume enough fibre, aim for the recommended number of servings.

What is One Food Guide Serving?

Look at the examples below.

The infographic is divided into five horizontal color-coded bands, each containing illustrations of food items and their corresponding serving sizes:

- Green Band (Vegetables & Fruit):**
 - Fresh, frozen or canned vegetables: 125 mL (½ cup)
 - Leafy vegetables: Cooked: 125 mL (½ cup); Raw: 250 mL (1 cup)
 - Fresh, frozen or canned fruits: 1 fruit or 125 mL (½ cup)
 - 100% Juice: 125 mL (½ cup)
- Yellow Band (Grain Products):**
 - Bread: 1 slice (35 g)
 - Bagel: ½ bagel (45 g)
 - Flat breads: ½ pita or ½ tortilla (35 g)
 - Cooked rice, bulgur or quinoa: 125 mL (½ cup)
 - Cereal: Cold: 30 g; Hot: 175 mL (¾ cup)
 - Cooked pasta or couscous: 125 mL (½ cup)
- Blue Band (Dairy):**
 - Milk or powdered milk (reconstituted): 250 mL (1 cup)
 - Canned milk (evaporated): 125 mL (½ cup)
 - Fortified soy beverage: 250 mL (1 cup)
 - Yogurt: 175 g (¾ cup)
 - Kefir: 175 g (¾ cup)
 - Cheese: 50 g (1 ½ oz.)
- Red Band (Protein):**
 - Cooked fish, shellfish, poultry, lean meat: 75 g (2 ½ oz.)/125 mL (½ cup)
 - Cooked legumes: 175 mL (¾ cup)
 - Tofu: 150 g or 175 mL (¾ cup)
 - Eggs: 2 eggs
 - Peanut or nut butters: 30 mL (2 Tbsp)
 - Shelled nuts and seeds: 60 mL (¼ cup)

Adapted from Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating, 2007

Grain Products:

Lower Fibre Choices	Higher Fibre Choices
White pasta (ex. Spaghetti, macaroni)	Whole wheat pasta
Non-whole grain cereal (ex. Rice Krispies, Corn Flakes, Corn Pops)	Whole grain cereals (ex. Shredded wheat, All Bran, Mini wheats, raisin bran, oat bran)
Non-whole grain cooked cereals. (ex. Cream of wheat)	Whole grain cooked cereals (ex. Oatmeal, Oat bran)
All white breads and bread products (ex. Bagels, bread sticks, dinner rolls, English muffins, hamburger/hot dog buns, pita bread)	Non-white breads and bread products (ex. Rye, whole grain, whole wheat)
Soda crackers	Rye crackers, graham crackers, Triscuits, whole wheat crackers, wasa, Ryvita
White rice	Brown rice, bulgur, barley, quinoa, millet



Grain Products continued:

- Make sure to eat breakfast every morning. Include whole grains such as bread and/or cereal. If unable to eat a high fibre cereal on its own, add a high fibre cereal such as bran to a lower fibre cereal. Consider sprinkling cereal with one tablespoon of ground flaxseed.
- Switch to whole grain breads and bread products, pasta, rice, and flours. Make vegetable and bean soups more often. Try adding bulgur or barley instead of pasta.
- Add bran cereal or wheat bran to baking, pancakes, or waffle mixes.
- All Bran Bud singles is a good choice for a snack!



Fruits:

Lower Fibre Choices	Medium-Fibre Choices	Higher-Fibre Choices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cherries - Grapes - Peaches - Melons (honeydew, cantaloupe, watermelon) - Fruit juices and peeled fruits - Fruit cocktails and sauces (ex. apple sauce) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oranges and tangerines - Peeled apples and pears - Pineapples - Bananas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pears with skin - Apples with skin - Mangoes - Blueberries - Raspberries - Strawberries - Dried fruits, including peaches, prunes, apricots, figs, raisins, and cranberries

Vegetables:

Lower Fibre Choices	Medium Fibre Choices	Higher Fibre Choices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Onions - Cucumbers - Mushrooms - Tomatoes - Celery - Cauliflower - Cabbage - Creamed corn - Potatoes without the skin, such as peeled and mashed - Asparagus - Squash - Lettuce - Spinach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bean sprouts - String beans - Broccoli - Brussels sprouts - Raw carrots - Eggplant (aubergines) - Parsnips - Turnip - Corn on the cob - Whole kernel corn - Potato with skin - Sweet potato with skin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Green peas: fresh, frozen or canned - Snow peas - Swiss chard - Legumes - Popcorn



Fruits and Vegetables:

- No fruits and vegetables should be avoided as they all contain fibre; however, the higher fibre choices are recommended.
- Fruit and vegetable juices should be limited to ½ cup per day, as they are very low in fibre.
- Make sure to add a side serving of cooked vegetables, or vegetables and hummus with both lunch and dinner.
- Leave the skin on fruits and vegetables when possible (ex. Apples) to increase the fibre content.

Higher Fibre Meat Alternatives

Although meat is not a high source of fibre, many alternatives are:

- Nuts and seeds
 - 1 tablespoon of peanut butter has 2.7 grams of fibre. Spreading peanut butter thinly on whole wheat crackers can help increase fibre.
Peanut products for children over the age of 3.
 - Add beans such as black beans, kidney beans, navy beans to meals. Ex. Soups, chilli, casseroles, salads, nachos, refried beans, burritos and pasta dishes.
- Use wheat germ, whole wheat bread crumbs, or ground nuts to coat chicken and fish



Quick High Fibre Snacks:

- Fruit (ex. Apple slices sprinkled with cinnamon or dipped in yogurt)
- Whole grain crackers with peanut butter or cheese
- Muffins or cookies made with 100% bran cereal, oatmeal, wheat germ, nuts, seeds, or ground flaxseed
- Natural wheat bran or ground flaxseed added to a smoothie or milkshake
- Granola bars with at least 4 grams of fibre per serving
- Popcorn (for children over 4 years of age)
- Cut up raw vegetable sticks with dip or hummus
- ¼ cup Dried fruit or trail mix (for children over 4 years of age if the trail mix contains nuts)



Treating Constipation:

Start with a natural laxative first:

- Try diluted prune juice (with pulp), a tablespoon or two for infants around 6 months or age and up; 8 ounces for children 3 years of age and up.
- Strained prunes or prune puree (stew your own or buy commercial), either straight or disguised (mix with a favourite food), or spread on a high-fibre cracker.
- Apricots, prunes, pears, plums and peaches usually have a laxative effect.

If the above options don't work, try:

- Psyllium husks (basically, very fine flakes of psyllium bran, available at bulk food stores and health food stores) which are a natural-fibre stool softener. Sprinkle on a cereal or combine in a fruit and yogurt mixture or in a smoothie.
 - Dosage:
 - Toddlers and children: begin with 1 teaspoon a day and increase to 2 teaspoons as needed.
 - Be sure to drink an 8-ounce (1 cup) glass of water with psyllium.
 - Psyllium is also available over-the-counter as Metamucil
- Benefibre or Normacol are alternatives to Metamucil. When using these products, it is important to drink lots of water.
- Flax oil is a healthy alternative to mineral oil. Dosage: Infants: 1 teaspoon per day; toddlers: 2 teaspoons per day; children: 1 tablespoon per day
- Flaxseed meal (ground flaxseeds) are even better as a laxative than flax oil. Mix in cereal, soup, yogurt, applesauce or a smoothie. Dosage: Toddlers: 1 tablespoon a day; older children: 2 tablespoons a day.
- Peg Flakes – talk with your doctor about recommended dosage.

Tips and Tricks:

- Set up regular meal and snack times can help your child get into a routine
- Limit sugary, high-fat, and processed foods. Ex. Cookies, donuts, cake, fried foods.
- Never ignore the urge to have a bowel movement
- Increase fibre content slowly to prevent bloating and gas
- As you increase fibre in your diet, increase the amount of fluids you drink to prevent constipation.
- Lack of exercise can lead to constipation. Children should aim for 90 minutes of exercise every day.
- Try putting your child on the toilet at the same time every day (for example, after every meal), and give them something to read. Don't rush these things! A lot of children don't completely empty their bowels, which can cause more problems.
- Make sure the child's feet are resting on something, such as a step stool. This helps relax the pelvic floor muscles, which can help move the bowels.

Raspberry-flax smoothie recipe

Fresh fruit smoothies are a great way to add more fibre in your diet. Adding 1 tablespoon of ground flaxseed gives extra fibre. Try making this at home for breakfast. This recipe has 5 g of fibre per serving. Option: add other fruits, such as pear with the skin.

Mix in a blender and serve:

- 1/2 cup (125 ml) of milk
- 6 oz (175 g) plain vanilla yogurt
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) frozen raspberries
- 1 tablespoon (15 ml) ground flaxseed



Sweet Potato Fries

1 1/2 pounds sweet potatoes cut into 1/2 inch wide strips (skin on)

1/4 cup olive oil

1/2 tsp salt

1/2 tsp dried Italian herb seasoning

Preheat oven to 425. Coat baking sheet with cooking spray.

Toss ingredients together in a bowl.

Place sweet potato strips on baking sheet in a single layer.

Bake for 30 minutes, turning every 10 minutes. Serve warm. Serves 4.

Comments:

Dietitian: _____ Phone Number: _____