

Church of Christ Assisted Living

January 2021 Active Living Services Newsletter

Why Seniors Should Add More Fiber to Their Diets

You have heard that it is important to get enough fiber, especially as you grow older, but how much is enough? Also, why is fiber so good for you? There are many benefits to eating a diet that is rich in fiber besides its reputation for making it easier to 'go'. Numerous studies have proven that fibrous foods help seniors age healthier because they lead to lower cholesterol, control blood sugar levels, normalize bowel movements, and help them manage a healthy weight. Fiber is found in a lot of foods, like fruits, vegetables, nuts and legumes, grains, and cereal, so it is easy to add to daily meals. Despite the advantages of maintaining a diet with the proper amount of fiber, many aging adults do not get enough. Continue to read along, as we break down fiber's role in helping us stay healthy during our golden years, as well as provide tips on how to eat more of it.

What is Fiber, and How Does it Help? High-fiber foods are generally low in fat and calories, yet packed with essential minerals and vitamins that promote healthy bodily functions. There are two different types of fiber – insoluble and soluble. When most people think about fiber, insoluble fiber comes to mind. It does not dissolve in water, and as it travels through the digestive tract, does not change its form. Insoluble fiber performs a variety of helpful functions in our bodies, from controlling pH acidity levels in the intestines to eliminating toxic waste through the

colon to moving roughage through the digestive tract. A range of foods contain insoluble fiber, including vegetables (especially dark, leafy green types), root veggie skins and fruit skins, seeds and nuts, wheat bran and corn bran, and whole-grain products. Soluble fiber is very different from insoluble. It dissolves in water and changes its form while moving through the digestive tract, where it is fermented by bacteria. Soluble fiber becomes gelatinous, binds to fatty acids, slows down the time it takes to empty the stomach, and also slows the rate of sugar absorption. This type of fiber is known to lower cholesterol levels, which is something that is always important when you are getting older. There are many healthy sources of soluble fiber, such as kidney beans, apples, oranges, zucchini, grapefruit, Brussel sprouts, broccoli, prunes, oatmeal, whole-wheat breads, and spinach.

Data Favors Fiber: A recent paper published in The Journals of Gerontology found a correlation between fiber intake and successful aging. In this 10-year study, researchers tracked the habits and health stats of 1,609 adults, age 49, who were cancer free and had no problems related to stroke or coronary artery disease. Researchers found fiber intake was by far the most important factor to successful aging or reaching old age free of disease and disability. After



Active Living Services Department

Katie Murphy,
Director of Active Living Services

Fitness Club

Senior group movement classes focusing on muscular strength, endurance, balance, and flexibility. The Fitness Club is performed in a chair and open to all fitness levels!

When:

10:30am-11:30am
Monday-Friday

Health Seminars

Health and wellness presentations focusing on disease management and various senior wellness topics.

Foodie Group

Asunda Amluxen, Assisted Living Chef Manager, presents current health & nutrition topics and recipes.

"There is nothing more beautiful than someone who goes out of their way to make life beautiful for others."

Mandy Hale

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10 years, 15.5% of the participants were said to have a successful aging status. These individuals with higher fiber intake were nearly 80% more likely to live longer, healthier lives.

How Much Fiber Should You Eat? The USDA cites that most people are not consuming enough fiber. This is especially true for seniors. According to the health and medical division experts from the Academy of Nutrition and Diabetics, men over the age of 50 should consume 30 grams of fiber per day, and women over 50 should have 21. In most cases, five servings of fruits and vegetables and servings of whole grains each day should allow you to meet your daily fiber requirement. Be sure to start slow when adding foods that are rich in fiber as snacks and meals because too much fiber too fast can potentially cause pain and discomfort. Be sure to drink plenty of water as this will keep fiber moving through the digestive tract.

Fiber for a Healthier You: Instead of using supplements, search for fiber-rich foods such as leafy green vegetables, apples, grapefruit, oranges, and other fruits in addition to unprocessed whole grains.

New Ways to Set Goals in 2021

Setting goals for yourself is absolutely the right thing to do, but just having good intentions alone changes nothing. You can make resolutions all you want – but a resolution without a plan is just wishful thinking. So, how can you stick with your goals throughout the year? Make SMART goals!

What are SMART Goals?

Creating SMART goals gives you direction. They make it easy to see if you are getting closer to your target or still treading water. There are five building blocks that will help you reach your SMART goals:

Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Relevant
Time-Sensitive

S – Specific

What do you want to achieve? Get down to the nitty-gritty with it. Just saying you want to lose weight will not cut it. Instead try, "I would like to drop 20 pounds and be able to do at least 20 sit-ups in a row without passing out." Watch for any roadblocks that could keep you from reaching your goal and plan to get around them.

M – Measurable

Break your goal into doable chunks. Give yourself daily, weekly, and monthly steps. Focus on those, accomplish one, then head on to the next one.

A – Achievable

Is your goal realistic? Do you have the ability to do it? What about the skills or tools you need to reach it? If not, no shame. Just change your

goal to something you can accomplish. You do not want easy-to-reach goals though. Stretch yourself, but do not chase after something that will wind up discouraging you in the long run!

R - Relevant

Does the goal fit with the overall plan you have? If your goal is to learn the art of origami and you have room for a new hobby, great! But if you have plenty of hobbies, think about spending that energy elsewhere. And do not forget to figure out what your why is! Your why could be something like, "I want to go on dates with my spouse twice a month to invest in and strengthen our relationship." Why you want to do something is powerful.

T – Time-Sensitive

Set a time limit – because you need a finish line. Take that goal of yours, create a plan, and break it all the way down to daily activities. Then, give yourself a deadline. For example, "I would like to lose 20 pounds by December 31." To lose 20 pounds, calculate things like how many times you need to work out each week and daily calorie intake.

7 Areas of Life for SMART Goals

- **Financial Goals**
- **Spiritual Goals:** Pick up a new devotional, start a daily journal, or plug in to a group at your church.
- **Fitness Goals:** Move more often and remember to eat your veggies.
- **Educational Goals:** Read a good book every month.
- **Family Goals:** Call your family on Sunday nights.
- **Career Goals**
- **Social Goals:** Say yes when someone invites you out.

Get started on your goals today!