

Words on Wellness

Fiber: Your Health's Best Friend



Fiber plays a key role in many different body functions. Yet, most adults in the United States only get about half of the suggested amount for daily fiber intake. The current Dietary Guidelines recommend that adults consume 22 to 34 grams of fiber each day, depending on age and sex. Fiber is mainly found in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, and peas. The main functions of fiber include the following:

Controlling blood sugar —Fiber helps reduce blood sugar spikes, which is especially important for people with prediabetes or diabetes.

Heart Protection —Including fiber in a healthy diet may lower cholesterol and reduce your risk of heart disease.

Maintaining digestive health — Fiber aids in a regular and healthy digestive system, reduces constipation, and may reduce your risk of colon cancer.

Feeling Full —Fiber slowly works through the digestive system to help keep you feeling full for a longer time. This can also help with weight loss or weight maintenance.

There are many tasty ways to get more fiber. Eat oatmeal with nuts and berries. Pick whole grains like brown rice or whole wheat pasta and bread. Add more nonstarch veggies to meals. Include beans or peas in casseroles or soups. Choose whole fruits like apples and raspberries instead of juice.

Sources: [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov), go.iastate.edu/7MJYMV
[Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](https://www.nutrition.org/), go.iastate.edu/X1WNIA
[Dietary Guidelines for Americans](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/), go.iastate.edu/CH0N8W

Pumpkin Oatmeal

Serving Size: 1 cup | Serves: 2

Ingredients:

- 1 cup milk
- 1/2 cup oats (old fashioned or quick cooking)
- 1/2 cup pumpkin puree
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 3 tablespoons chopped or sliced nuts (almonds, pecans, walnuts)
- 4 teaspoons maple or pancake syrup

Directions:

1. In a large, microwave safe bowl, stir together milk, oats, pumpkin puree, and cinnamon.
2. Cook in microwave for 3 minutes, stirring every minute.
3. Stir in nuts and syrup. Let cool for 2 minutes.

Tips:

Serve with extra nuts on top or a spoonful of chia seeds stirred in. Substitute dried fruit for the nuts. Freeze leftover pumpkin in an airtight container.

Nutrition information per serving:

250 calories, 9g total fat, 1g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 0mg cholesterol, 55mg sodium, 35g total carbohydrate, 5g fiber, 9g protein.

This recipe is courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach's Spend Smart. Eat Smart. website. For more information, recipes, and videos, visit spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu



Just Keep Swimming

Water-based exercises have low impact and can improve physical and mental health. Many people find water exercise to be more enjoyable and easier on their joints than working out on land. In addition, you do not need to be a strong swimmer to enjoy being active in the water. Try these water exercise ideas the next time you find yourself at your local pool:

- Group water aerobics class
- Water walking
- Deep-water walking or treading water
- Arm exercises using hand webs or water weights
- Leg exercises with a noodle
- Resistance exercise with a kickboard or water weights

Get active in the water to improve your health while having fun at any age or fitness level!

Sources: [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/), go.iastate.edu/KP3AUV
[Mayo Clinic](https://www.mayoclinic.org/), go.iastate.edu/6JQTPC



Live Healthy Iowa 10-Week Wellness Challenge? Bring it on!

It can be hard to feel motivated to exercise during the long winter months. The Live Healthy Iowa 10 Week Wellness Challenge may be the answer! This 10-week challenge includes tracking activity minutes and/or weight loss with a team (2–10 people). The challenge occurs January–March 2025 and costs \$25 per participant. This is an affordable and simple way for all Iowans to boost their health while enjoying fun and friendly competition with others. Participants receive a t-shirt, a personalized online dashboard, a free magazine subscription, weekly motivational messages, discounts on the Live Healthy Iowa 5K, and a chance to win prizes! Grab your family, friends, or coworkers and [register today](https://livehealthyiowa.org/10-challenge) at livehealthyiowa.org/10-challenge!

Copyright 2022 © Iowa State University of Science and Technology, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. All rights reserved. This institution is an equal opportunity provider. For the full non-discrimination statement or accommodation inquiries, go to www.extension.iastate.edu/diversity/ext.
PM 2099 January 2025

Here for you.
Now.
Always.

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach

AnswerLine

Call 1-800-262-3804

extension.iastate.edu/answerline

Spend Smart. Eat Smart.®

spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu

Human Sciences

[extension.iastate.edu/](https://extension.iastate.edu/humansciences)

[humansciences](https://extension.iastate.edu/humansciences)

If you or someone you know is skipping meals, going hungry, or choosing between food and medicine, call 1-855-944-3663 to apply for assistance today.

Call Iowa 2-1-1 or Iowa Lifelong Links, 1-866-468-7887, for additional resources.

