

Fibre and Constipation

Fibre helps to prevent constipation and gives you the best chance of having a regular, comfortable bowel habit. Fibre comes from plant food such as fruit, vegetables, breads, cereals, nuts and seeds.

How to prevent and manage constipation

- **Increase fibre-rich foods gradually** – aim for at least SIX servings of breads and cereals and FIVE servings of fruit and vegetables each day.

Examples of one serving

1 slice of bread

½ to 1 cup breakfast cereal

1 cup cooked rice or pasta

1 or 2 small fresh fruit

½ cup canned or stewed fruit

½ cup salad

- Start the day with a high fibre breakfast cereal. Try weet-bix, bran-based cereals or porridge. Add fresh or stewed fruit or a handful of your favourite nuts to your cereal.
- Choose wholemeal, wholegrain or high fibre white breads.
- Add extra vegetables to soups and casseroles – add grated carrot to mince dishes, diced potatoes or kumara (with skins on) to casseroles.
- Leave the skin on whenever possible – potato, kumara, pumpkin – this saves time in the kitchen as well as being high in fibre!
- Add fruit to biscuits, scones, cakes and muffins.
- Add lentils or split peas to soups and casseroles.
- Try baked beans as a quick meal or sandwich filling, or a salad made from canned mixed beans.
- Use wholemeal flour, breadcrumbs and oats in your cooking.
- For your main meal, fill ½ your plate with vegetables.
- **Eat regular meals and snacks** – eat three regular meals and healthy snacks in between. Breakfast is particularly important as it triggers movement in the large bowel.
- **Have plenty to drink** – you need about six to eight cups of water or other drinks each day to keep your body working properly. Tea and coffee can be included but go easy on cordial, energy and soft drinks and fruit juice. Water is cheap and easy to get. Keep a jug in the fridge, with a slice of lemon or orange, or mint leaves.

This information is not intended to replace the advice of your doctor or individual consultation with a Registered Dietitian. This information may only be used in its entirety.

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Canterbury

District Health Board

Te Peori I auora o Waitana

- **Keep active** – be active every day in as many different ways as possible.

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