

**H I G H F I B E R D I E T**

**PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET**

**What is a high fiber diet?**

Fiber is a component of plant foods that can not be completely digested by the body. A high fiber diet includes foods such as fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, whole grains, bran and beans. All of these foods are rich sources of dietary fiber. Animal and dairy products such as meat, fish, poultry, eggs and milk do not contain fiber.

**Why is a high fiber diet important?**

Once consumed, fiber goes through the digestive system providing bulk and absorbing water. By increasing fiber intake, your body feels full and you are less likely to overeat. In addition, the presence of fiber in the diet keeps stools soft and regular, which can decrease the risk of constipation, irritable bowel syndrome, and other bowel problems. In addition, research has found that a diet with adequate amounts of fiber may prevent colon cancer. For fiber to work most effectively, adequate fluid intake is needed. Remember to drink a liter of water or other fluids each day, unless your physician recommends otherwise.

**How much fiber do I need?**

The dietary guidelines for Americans recommend 20-35 grams of fiber each day. Individuals tolerate fiber differently. Too much fiber added to your diet suddenly may cause loose stools or bloating. It is advised that you gradually add fiber to your diet until you reach your target. A sensible target is to eat the amount of fiber that results in normal bowel movements. A sample high fiber diet menu is included below. For information about the fiber content of common foods, or if you have questions regarding your diet or nutrition, please **contact the Greenwich Hospital nutrition staff at 203.863.3000 ext. 5211.**

## Sample High Fiber Menu

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snack	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orange juice (4oz)</li> <li>• Banana (1/2)</li> <li>• Raisin bran (3/4 cup)</li> <li>• Whole wheat toast (1 slice)</li> <li>• Butter (1tsp)</li> <li>• Low fat milk (8 oz)</li> <li>• Coffee (1 cup)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hamburger:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lean ground beef (3oz)</li> <li>- Whole grain bun (1)</li> <li>- Lettuce, seeded tomato, onion</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Apple (1)</li> <li>• Oatmeal cookies (2)</li> <li>• Low fat milk (1 cup)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tossed salad (1 ½ cups)</li> <li>• Ranch dressing (1 Tbsp.)</li> <li>• Roast turkey breast (3 oz)</li> <li>• Gravy (1 Tbsp.)</li> <li>• Bread stuffing (1/2 cup)</li> <li>• Sweet potato (1/2)</li> <li>• Green beans (1 cup)</li> <li>• Margarine (2 tsp.)</li> <li>• Green grapes (24)</li> <li>• Tea with lemon (1 cup)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 medium pear</li> <li>• Sparkling water with lime (12 oz)</li> </ul>	
<b>Grams fiber per meal:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10.4 g</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7.0 g</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 14.0 g</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4.0 g</li> </ul>

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