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Article

3 Sneaky Signs You're Not Eating Enough Fiber and How Soy Can Help

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What if you heard there's a nutrient that curbs cravings and leaves you feeling full and content after every meal? What if that same nutrient can also help reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease¹ and boost gut health²? What is this special nutrient? It's fiber. The craziest part is only 7%³ of adults are eating enough of it!

Though the symptoms of having too little are not always easy to spot, here are 3 signs to look for and some easy tips to help you eat more with soy.

1. You're hungry shortly after eating

Fiber has the fantastic ability to keep you feeling full and satisfied after meals because it takes longer for your body to digest fiber-rich foods. If you're including other filling foods like protein and healthy fat at meals, but you're still raiding the fridge soon after, you're likely missing the fiber.

2. You're going to the bathroom too much, or not enough

Let's talk about that taboo topic- bathroom breaks. If you're making too many trips or not enough, your fiber intake might need a little boost. Fiber works wonders for your digestive system by regulating bowel movements, ensuring everything moves along smoothly. It's like your body's natural plumber, keeping things flowing just right.

Fiber helps slow gastrointestinal transit time (helping with diarrhea) and stimulate gastrointestinal motility (helping with constipation).

¹ <https://bmcpublihealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-022-13419-y>

² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9787832/#:~:text=In%20summary%2C%20low%2Dfiber%20diets,increase%20the%20risk%20of%20diseases.>

³ <https://www.dropbox.com/s/sez34a9qppe67bi/Miketinas%20abstract.docx?e=1&dl=0>

On top of all this, eating more fiber can help strengthen the lining of your colon. Researchers believe this might be why diets rich in fiber are linked to a lower risk of colon cancer⁴.

3. You have high cholesterol

Another one of fiber's superpowers is its ability to bind to cholesterol in our bloodstream and move it out, preventing plaque build up in our arteries. In fact, a large study published in *Nutrients* showed that for every 7 grams of fiber eaten daily, your risk of heart disease drops by 9%⁵!

Now that you're convinced that you need to eat more fiber, you might be asking yourself how? It's easier than you think. Foods like whole grains, fruits, veggies, nuts, beans, seeds, and soy are all sources of fiber.

How much do you need?

The [Dietary Guidelines](#) for Americans suggests the following amounts of fiber:

- **Women under 50:** 25 to 28 grams per day
- **Men under 50:** 31 to 34 grams per day
- **Women 51 and older:** 22 grams per day
- **Men 51 and older:** 28 grams per day

Soy fiber content:

While many are aware of the impressive nutritional benefits of soy, like being a complete plant-based protein, having heart-healthy fats, and essential vitamins and minerals, it's often overlooked that soy is also a source of dietary fiber.

One-half cup of soybeans provides approximately 5-6 grams of dietary fiber. It's important to note that not all soy foods have equal amounts of fiber. Tofu and soymilk, for example, contain very little fiber. On the other hand, soy foods that use the whole bean, such as tempeh, edamame, and textured vegetable protein (TVP), have more.

Tempeh: ½ cup = 5 grams of fiber

⁴<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6560290/>

⁵ <https://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/11/5/1155>

Edamame: ½ cup = 4 grams of fiber

TVP: ½ cup = 6 grams of fiber

Here are some fun fiber-filled soy recipes:

[Basil Lime Edamame Toast](#)

[Tempeh Nourish Bowl with Lemon Miso Dressing](#)

[Spaghetti with Olive, Caper, and Tempeh Tomato Sauce](#)

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Chelsea LeBlanc, RDN, LD, is an award-winning registered dietitian nutritionist, recipe developer, and media personality in Nashville, TN. She runs a virtual private practice and helps career-driven women plan and prep quick and easy meals on a budget. She frequently contributes to multiple media outlets—including Eat This, Not That!, Well + Good, MSN, and Eating Well. Find her on social media @chelsealeblancrdn or visit her website chelsealeblancrdn.com.



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