

Dietary fibre was traditionally called “roughage” but is now technically called non-starch polysaccharide (NSP). There are a number of different substances that are classed as NSP and based on their function in the body they are divided into two broad types:

1. Soluble fibre
2. Insoluble fibre

Soluble fibre

Soluble fibre can benefit health through the following functions:

- reducing blood cholesterol levels. High blood cholesterol levels are a risk factor for heart disease.
- delaying the absorption of sugar from the gut and therefore, improving control of blood glucose (sugar) levels for people with diabetes.

Good sources of soluble fibre:

- oats including rolled oats and porridge
- legumes including baked beans, kidney beans, other dried beans (home cooked or canned), lentils, split peas, chick peas
- fruit

Insoluble fibre

Insoluble fibre can benefit health through the following functions:

- acting as a bulking agent; through absorbing water and forming softer faeces, fibre helps to prevent constipation and keep the gut healthy
- promoting a feeling of fullness so people are less likely to overeat - this can help with weight management.

Good food sources of insoluble fibre:

- wholemeal or wholegrain bread – check packet labels and use bread that has at least 5g fibre per 100g bread
- wholegrain/bran breakfast cereals including weetbix and branflakes. Check packet labels and use cereals that have at least 15g fibre per 100g cereal.
- wholemeal pasta
- vegetables and fruit

* Note – meat, fish, chicken, eggs and milk products do not contain fibre (NSP).

Fibre Content of Some Common Foods

Food	Fibre Content (grams)
Breakfast Cereals	
1 cup sultana bran	7.0
1/2 cup muesli	6.5
2 weetbix	4.8
1 cup porridge	2.1
1 cup cornflakes	1.3
1 cup rice bubbles	0.8
Bread	
1 slice heavy grain bread	2.5
1 slice wholemeal bread	2.0
1 slice fibre white bread	1.5
1 slice white bread	1.0
Other Cereals	
2 ryvita crackers	1.6
2 cream crackers	0.2
1 cup spaghetti (tinned)	2.7
1 cup brown rice	3.7
1 cup macaroni	1.3
1 cup noodles	0.8
1 cup rice	0.9
Fruit	
1 pear	3.1
1 nectarine	2.1
1 banana	1.9
1 orange	2.2
1 apple	1.9
1 kiwi fruit	1.6
Vegetables	
1 cup baked beans	16.3
1/2 cup peas	4.3
1/2 cup mixed vegetables	4.3
1 kumara	3.0
1 potato	2.0
1 carrot	1.6
1/2 cup cabbage (cooked)	1.4
1 tomato	1.5
1 lettuce leaf	0.1

*** The recommended intake of fibre per day is 25-30 grams.**