Fit For Life: A Family Approach

Eating High Fiber Foods

By Kathleen M. Studler and Joan C. Elledge*

Fit For Life: A Family Approach is a nutrition series for families. The information, challenges, games, puzzles, and food preparation suggestions are designed to encourage you and your family to discuss daily habits that promote good health.

Read the publication, solve the puzzles, and play the Table Talk Challenge with your family. Become a “Fit for Life Family!” and meet the Virginia Cooperative Extension’s challenge!

- Eat a Variety of Fruits, Vegetables, and Whole-Grain Foods
- Eat 2 Servings of Calcium Rich Foods
- Be Physically Active
- Handle Food Safely

Your challenge is to help your family eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, and whole-grain foods each day to get fiber into their diets.

**Why Does Your Family Need Fiber?**
Your family’s good health does not just happen. Every family member must be encouraged to make good food choices every day. Plan meals and snacks with a variety of lowfat, high-fiber vegetables, fruits, dried beans, seeds, and whole-grain foods. It is important for a healthy digestive system. Every day, drink plenty of water and do physical activities to stay regular. Fiber-rich foods may lower blood cholesterol, which may decrease your risk for heart and artery disease. Also, lowfat, high fiber foods may reduce the risk of certain cancers, obesity, and diabetes.

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**Food Guide Pyramid**

- Fats, Oils & Sweets
  - Use Sparingly
  - Milk, Yogurt & Cheese Group
    - 2-3 Servings
  - Vegetable Group
    - 3-5 Servings
  - Fruit Group
    - 2-4 Servings
  - Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs & Nuts Group
    - 2-3 Servings
  - Bread, Cereal, Rice & Pasta Group
    - 6-11 Servings

**Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children**

- Fats, Oils & Sweets
  - Use Sparingly
  - Milk, Yogurt & Cheese Group
    - 2-3 Servings
  - Vegetable Group
    - 3-5 Servings
  - Fruit Group
    - 2-4 Servings
  - Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs & Nuts Group
    - 2-3 Servings
  - Bread, Cereal, Rice & Pasta Group
    - 6-11 Servings
Fiber or roughage is found only in plant foods. There is no fiber in meat, fish, poultry, eggs, or dairy products. Plants have two types of fiber—insoluble and soluble. Insoluble fiber is an indigestible part of the plant that is tough and chewy to eat. It cannot be digested and helps food pass through the digestive system quickly. Soluble fiber acts like a sponge. It absorbs liquid and increases the water content of the waste (feces) making it easier to expel.

Fiber is found in these four food groups in the Food Guide Pyramid. The National Cancer Institute developed the “5 A Day” programs to encourage Americans to eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables each day. All fruits, vegetables, and dried beans and peas are great sources of fiber, especially when you eat the skins and membranes.

### How much fiber do you need each day?

Fiber is measured in grams. Adults need 20-35 grams of dietary fiber each day. The amount of fiber children need depends on their age. How much fiber a child needs is figured by the “age + 5” rule. For example, an 8-year old plus 5 needs 13 grams of fiber. How much fiber does your child need? Simply complete this formula:

**Age:** _______ + 5 = _______ grams of fiber per day

Adults can get about 20 grams of fiber if you choose at least:

- 3 Servings a day of Whole-Grain Foods +
- 3 Servings a day of Vegetables +
- 2 Servings a day of Fruits

“Eat at least one high fiber food every day! The foods in bold print in the shopping list are high fiber foods.”

### If you buy it, they will eat it!

Your family cannot eat what they don’t see. Make your shopping list to include a variety of fruits, vegetables, dried beans and peas, and whole-grain foods. Here is a list of ways to increase fiber in your family’s meals. Remember to buy store and in-season specials. Take a shopping list and shop alone to stay on your food budget! It takes a plan to buy the best foods for the best prices.
Two Ways to Soak Beans

**Overnight soak method**
- Pick out damaged beans or stones. Rinse beans in cold water.
- Put 1 pound of beans in a large pan and cover with 6 cups of lukewarm water.
- Cover pan and refrigerate overnight or for 8 hours.
- Drain the beans, rinse, and cover with fresh cold water.
- Cook on low heat until beans are tender. Drain.

**Short soak method**
- Pick out damaged beans or stones. Rinse beans in cold water.
- Put 1 pound of beans in a large pan and cover with 6 cups of lukewarm water.
- Boil beans uncovered for 2 minutes, remove from heat.
- Cover and let stand 1 hour. Drain the beans.

### Plan for the Cooking Times for 1 pound:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Beans</th>
<th>Amount of Water</th>
<th>Approximate Cooking Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lima Beans</td>
<td>5 cups</td>
<td>1 hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy Beans</td>
<td>6 cups</td>
<td>1 1/2 to 2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidney or Pinto Beans</td>
<td>6 cups</td>
<td>2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soybeans</td>
<td>8 cups</td>
<td>2 to 3 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Range Top Baked Beans

*6 servings, about 1/2 cup each*

- 1 3/4 cups dry beans, Navy
- 4 1/2 cups water
- 1/4 cup onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup cooked smoked pork shoulder or turkey ham

Soak beans overnight, using 4 1/2 cups water. Drain and rinse beans. Cover with fresh water. Add meat and bring to a boil. Cover and simmer on low heat until beans are tender, 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Do not stir. Add remaining ingredients. Simmer 35 minutes, or until beans are soft but not mushy. Stir only to prevent sticking.

**Refrigerate leftovers.**

Nutrition information: 195 Calories, 3g Dietary Fiber, 9g Protein, 39g Carbohydrates, 1g Fat, 3mg Iron, 526mg Sodium, 62mg Calcium, 23RE Vitamin A, 5mg Vitamin C


**Answers:** Black-eyed peas, Lima, Kidney, Pinto, Chick, Lens, Split Peas, Soybeans.
Table Talk Challenge

**Game Rules:**

1. 2-3 players.
2. The youngest person takes the first turn.
3. Select a dried bean, uncooked macaroni, or a nut as a game piece for each player.
4. Use the list of questions letting the child answer, then the adult.
5. Follow instructions written on the game board.
6. The first player to reach or get the closest to the “Healthy Family” square is the winner.

**Game moves:**

- Did you eat at least 6 servings of different foods from the Bread, Cereal, Pasta & Rice group today? Move 2 spaces, if you did. Bonus: Move 1 extra space for each whole grain food you ate today. (See page 2)
- Did you choose to eat a high fiber food instead of a high fat or sugar food? If yes, move 2 spaces. If no, move back 2 spaces.
- Did you eat the minimum number of servings from all 5-food groups? If yes, move 5 spaces. If no, move backward 3 spaces.
- Did you eat 2 servings of fruit today? If yes, move 2 spaces. Bonus: Move 1 extra space, if it was a high fiber fruit. (See page 2)
- Did you eat a vegetable or fruit for a snack today? If yes, move 3 spaces.
- Did you eat dried beans or peas today? If yes, move 4 spaces. If no, move back 2 spaces.
- Did you eat 3 servings of vegetables today? If yes, move 2 spaces.
- Did you drink water today? If you drank at least 4 glasses of water, move 1 space. If you drank more than 4 glasses of water, move 2 spaces.
- Name the foods that you ate for dinner. Did you eat at least 3 different colored foods for dinner? If yes, move 2 spaces! If no, move back 3 spaces!
- Did you eat a donut today? If yes, move backward 3 spaces. If no, move forward 2 spaces.
- Did you eat a snack today that was a good source of fiber? If yes, move 2 spaces.
- Did you eat the 5 A Day Way - 5 fruits and vegetables in one day? If yes, move 5 spaces! If no, move backward 3 spaces.
- Today did you eat more whole grain foods than white flour foods? If yes, move 2 spaces. If no, move backward 2 spaces.
- Before eating or preparing fresh, raw fruits, everyone needs to wash them. Did you wash all your fruits today? If yes, move 1 space. If no, move back 2 spaces.
- Did you take a walk or perform another physical activity for 15-20 minutes today? If yes, move 2 spaces. Good Job!
- Did you eat and/or prepare foods with less fat today? If yes, move 1 space.