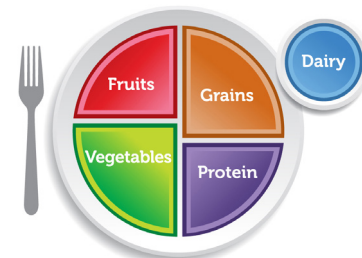




A Pioneering Area Agency on Aging

Digestion



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Changes to the digestive system can be more common as we age. Sometimes the digestive process will slow down, potentially causing changes in the frequency of bowel movements or even constipation. These changes may be due to the aging process, but may also be a combination of other factors such as medications, physical inactivity and not drinking enough fluids. There are several ways we can ensure our digestive system stays healthy and regular.

Fiber

Fiber is an essential part of a healthy diet. Fiber will not only help keep your digestive system regular but it can also lower cholesterol levels, promote heart health and manage blood sugar levels. Most Americans do not consume the recommended amount of fiber. The recommendations for fiber include:

- Men under age 50 = 38 grams per day
- Men over age 50 = 30 grams per day
- Women under age 50 = 25 grams per day
- Women over age 50 = 21 grams per day

Fiber is mostly found in fruits, vegetables, legumes and whole grains. Reading the Nutrition Facts label is important to determine how much fiber a food actually contains. A high fiber food will consist of 5 grams or more per serving. Aim to choose foods that have 3 or more grams of fiber per serving.

When increasing fiber, it is best to do it gradually over time. Adding in too much fiber at once can cause an upset stomach. Adequate water intake is also very important. Water helps push along the food in the digestive system. If your water intake is low, your digestion may be slower and may have an increased likelihood of constipation.

Prebiotics and Probiotics

Prebiotics and probiotics have become more popular in the past several years. A prebiotic is a plant fiber that nourishes the “good” bacteria in the gut and helps to maintain a balance between the “good” and “bad” bacteria. A probiotic provides “good” bacteria to the gut while working to protect your body from harmful bacteria.

Prebiotics include bananas, onions, garlic, asparagus and whole wheat foods. Probiotics include yogurt, kefir products, aged cheese, tempeh and sauerkraut. When prebiotics and probiotics are combined together, it is a win-win. This is called synbiotics. Together they work to restore and improve digestive health. Examples of synbiotics include bananas mixed into yogurt or feta cheese and onions on a salad.

MyPlate recommends having half of your plate be fruits and vegetables and incorporating a serving of whole grains. By following these recommendations, you should be consuming enough fiber for your body’s needs. It is best to get fiber and probiotics through food. Supplementation is available but you should consult your doctor or registered dietitian to determine if it is the right option for you.

PREBIOTICS + PROBIOTICS
FOOD FOR BACTERIA ← → LIVE GOOD BACTERIA

SYNBIOTICS

BENEFITS OF REBUILDING INTESTINAL MICROFLORA:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AID'S IMMUNE RESPONSE • NORMALIZES BOWEL FUNCTION • BALANCES INTESTINAL PH • INCREASES METABOLISM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INHIBITS STRESS DAMAGE • LOWERS CHOLESTEROL • REDUCES TOXIC OVERLOAD • AID'S IN MOOD REGULATION
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"ALL DISEASE BEGINS IN THE GUT"
- HIPPOCRATES



This fact sheet is distributed to help you obtain useful information regarding available community services and is not an inclusive list of providers. The information is subject to change following publication.

Solve the Puzzle

IBFRE

12					

TOSPIICORB

8				26		18		29		

COPTSIRBEI

22						10				

SITYISONCB

7		27			24			11		

WARTE

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TISFUR

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VAEBETSEGL

30			15		4	5	25		14	

MEGULSE

23			3	19		

WOLEH SIGNAR

2						17			16		28

ROTYUG

6						

1	2	3	4	5	6	2	7	8	9	10	11	12	D	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	2	25	26	27	28	29	D	30																

High Fiber Foods

- Raspberries, 1 cup = 8 grams per serving
- Pear, with skin, medium = 5.5 grams per serving
- Green peas, boiled, 1 cup = 8.8 grams per serving
- Broccoli, boiled, 1 cup = 5.1 grams per serving
- Black beans, boiled, 1 cup = 15 grams per serving
- Oatmeal, 1 cup, cooked = 4 grams per serving