

# HEALTHY EATING

## Fiber Focus Month

Fiber has many health benefits, so focus on adding fiber to your diet during January. Make sure to follow these tips when adding more fiber to your diet:

1. Start slowly by adding one fiber-rich food daily for one week, then increase by one serving until recommended levels are reached.
2. Add high-fiber foods gradually, since too much fiber at once produces discomfort.
3. Eat a variety of fiber-rich foods such as whole grain bread, oatmeal, fruits, and vegetables.



## Oatmeal Month

***Oatmeal Month occurs during January as more oatmeal is sold during January than any other month. It was originally established by Quaker's food service.***



Oatmeal is a whole grain that can be a delicious, warm way to add whole grains to your eating patterns during the cold winter season. Oats are full of important nutrients like vitamins B and E, calcium, magnesium, and zinc. This grain contains beta-glucan, a special kind of fiber, found to be especially effective in lowering cholesterol and insoluble dietary fiber, which has anticancer properties. Best of all, oats, like most other whole grains, can help us maintain a healthy weight.

There are several types of oatmeal such as rolled oats, quick cooking oats, instant oats, oat flour, and steel-cut oats. All these types have similar nutritional values, but

many times instant oatmeal has other ingredients added such as sugar. The only way to know if there are 'extra' ingredients is to read the ingredient label of the product.

Ideas to boost nutrition and flavor include:

- Make oatmeal with calcium-rich milk instead of water.
- Toss in raisins or dried cranberries and chopped nuts like walnuts or pecans.
- Add fresh or frozen berries or other fruits like apples or bananas.
- Mix in  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup unsweetened applesauce.
- Sprinkle with cinnamon for sweetness, it adds flavor without calories. With a dusting of cinnamon, a smaller amount sweetener, or perhaps none at all, may be needed.

If eating a bowl of oatmeal isn't something you even want to consider, try using rolled oats in baked products like cookies, muffins or breads. Oatmeal can be used in place of bread crumbs in meat loaf or patties. Couple a goal of eating more servings of whole grains with a regular exercise program for a healthier you.

Source: <https://food.unl.edu/free-resources/newsletters/family-fun-run/oatmeal-whole-grain-goodness>