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## HIGH FIBRE GUIDE

This general guide is designed to provide background and general advice about a high fibre diet causes. It aims to supplement verbal discussion, to answer common questions and to be readily available as an *aide memoir*. It cannot cover in detail every aspect of your individual circumstances and may not deal with some areas that are of particular concern to you. It is not a substitute for specific, individual advice from your doctor.

Further information is available at the web site above. This site also provides links to other sites that may provide additional information.

### What is fibre?

In general terms fibre is that part of the food that is not digested in the small intestine. It is found in plant foods such as cereals, fruit and vegetables. Fibre is of two types, insoluble, or soluble.

#### **Soluble**

May be helpful in control of cholesterol. Found in fruit, vegetables, some cereals and legumes (peas, beans *etc*)

#### **Insoluble**

Resistant to digestion and remains intact in the lower bowel where it absorbs water and reduces constipation. Found in whole grain foods.

Many modern foods lack the fibre found in more traditional diets. This results in a hard, small stool that is difficult to propel through the large bowel. Such stools are a contributing factor to many large bowel problems.

### The aim of your high fibre diet.

You should be passing a soft bulky stool without straining. This can be done by eating more high fibre foods and by drinking plenty of fluids. You should eat 25-35 grams of fibre per day.

### How can you eat more fibre?

You just gradually eat more of the following:

#### **Bread**

Eat wholemeal bread as it has more fibre than ordinary brown bread.

#### **Breakfast Cereals**

Choose wholegrain or bran enriched varieties such as Weetabix, Porridge, All-Bran or Bran Flakes. Have a helping each day.

#### **Pasta and Rice**

Try brown rice and wholemeal pasta such as macaroni, spaghetti or canned 'wholemeal' spaghetti hoops.

#### **Vegetables and Potatoes**

Fresh or frozen vegetables (3-5 helpings daily) should be eaten daily. Legumes (pea, beans, lentils) are especially high in fibre.

#### **Fresh Fruit**

Finish a meal with fruit (2 helpings daily). Take fruit as

**Biscuits**

snacks. Include the skin. Dried fruits are also suitable. Choose rye crispbreads, oatcakes, bran or digestive in preference to tea biscuits or chocolate.

**Soups:**

Choose those with lentils, beans or barley.

**Unprocessed bran.**

Include some bran if your bowels are not regular after eating ordinary high fibre foods, or you cannot eat a lot of the ordinary high fibre foods. If you do require bran, start cautiously with one tablespoon daily. If required, increase this to a maximum of two tablespoons daily. Try to find the combination of foods that suits you best.

**Water.**

Fibre binds water into the stool, making it softer and bulkier. Drink at least 1.5 to 2 litres each day. Fruit juices and fizzy drinks (e.g. colas) are high in calories.

**Medication.**

Initially an artificial bulking agent may be prescribed to supplement your diet whilst you increase your fibre intake. Options include Metamucil and other bulk laxatives. They all require a high fluid intake to work properly. You should be able to stop this after 3-4 weeks.