

Most of us have heard that we need fiber in our diets. Fiber helps keep us “regular”. This means that it helps our body poo on a regular basis, and makes the poo easier, quicker, and more comfortable to pass.

When children are getting ready for potty training, we want them to be regular because they’ll “go” more predictably (easier to make a habit!), and they won’t have to worry that the poo will be uncomfortable.

Dietary Fiber is found only in plant foods. You may have heard of *soluble* and *insoluble* fiber. **Soluble Fiber** dissolves in water to form a gel-like substance. It slows digestion, but also “smooths the way”. **Insoluble Fiber** adds bulk to stool, helping food pass more quickly through the digestive system. While they do different jobs, most foods have some of each. If your child eats *whole grains* (like wheat bread) and *fruits* or *vegetables*, they are probably getting a balance of soluble and insoluble fiber. Fiber is like a **sponge** that soaks up and scrubs off “waste” from your insides. Like washing your dishes, the waste then goes “down the drain” (out of your body).

*Like all sponges, fiber needs lots of water to do its job. **Without enough water, fiber can make constipation WORSE! Dietitians say, You need three times as much water as fiber.***



In other words, if your child eats plenty of fiber but is still constipated, they probably need more water.

Tips for Increasing Fiber Intake

1. **Gradual Increase:** Increase fiber in your diet slowly to give your digestive system time to adjust. This can help reduce uncomfortable side effects like gas or bloating.
2. **Hydration:** Drink **plenty** of water. Fiber needs water, to move smoothly through your digestive system.
3. **Balance:** Try to include a mix of both soluble and insoluble fiber throughout the day by eating whole grains (look for the words...XX), beans, se. This ensures you get the comprehensive benefits of both types.
4. **Make Big Differences with Little Changes** Whenever possible, choose whole fruits, vegetables, and whole grains over processed foods, as the whole foods contain more natural fiber. See the back of this form to learn how.

How far removed from its original state?

The closer a food is to the way it grew, the less processed it is They may not taste the same			
	More Processed	Less Processed	Least Processed
Fruit	Fruit snacks, gummies, fruit roll-ups	Frozen fruit (thawed), Fruit leather, dried/freeze dried fruit	Raw, fresh fruit
Bread	White bread	Bread listing “whole” grain as first ingredient: including wheat, barley, oats, rye Might be brownish color	
Pasta	White flour pasta	Pasta with added protein or fiber Whole grain pasta (Barilla Plus brand tastes similar to white flour)	
Crunchy Snacks	Crackers, goldfish, etc.	Parmesan crisp crackers Whole wheat/whole grain versions of Goldfish Popcorn (SkinnyPop, air popped)	Wasa crackers
Breakfast	Cereal	Granola	Oatmeal, cream of wheat, museli
Fruit Drinks	Juice “from concentrate” or sugar added in ingredients	Nutrition Facts say “100% juice”	Smoothies
Nuts and Seeds		Nut butters, nut flours (baking), ground flaxseed	Peanuts, cashews, pumpkin seeds (peptias), etc.

Plan Your Changes:

One food I can offer more is:

One food I can switch for a higher fiber version is: