



News You Can Use

Nutrition Education
with Seniors

November 2021

Fiber – Soluble versus Insoluble

Fiber helps keep your digestive tract healthy so that you can get the most out of what you eat. However, Americans are only eating about one-third of the fiber they need! **Women should aim for at least 21 to 25 grams of fiber daily while men should aim for 30 to 38 grams.**



There are two different types of fiber: soluble fiber and insoluble fiber. Both are important for digestion. However, they differ on how they help digestion and how they are absorbed.

Soluble fiber attracts water to the digestive tract and creates a gel. Think of what you see in the bottom of a can of kidney beans. This gel coats the digestive tract which slows down how quickly nutrients from the food are absorbed. The slowed absorption helps you feel full longer and helps your blood sugar rise steadily. Soluble fiber is found in a variety of foods like oat bran, barley, nuts, beans, peas, and lentils.

Insoluble fiber cannot be digested so it adds bulk to the stool and helps food pass more quickly through the digestive tract. This helps prevent constipation. Insoluble fiber is found in wheat bran, whole grains, and vegetables like sweet potatoes, cucumber, and zucchini.

Eating a variety of fiber-rich foods will help you get both types of fiber. When choosing foods, check the Nutrition Facts label on the back or side of food packaging for that food's fiber content. Choose the foods with a higher % Daily Value of fiber.

Adapted from: <https://bit.ly/2V4fRUM> and <https://bit.ly/2WKonZt>



Canned Sweet Potato

Selection:

- Choose cans without obvious damage; this could mean the **sweet potatoes** are unsafe to eat.
- Check the “Best by” or “Best if used by” date on the container.
- Look for the terms “lite syrup” and “low-sodium” on the label.

Storage:

- Store unopened can of **sweet potato** in a cool, clean, and dry place.
- Once opened, place **sweet potato** in an airtight container and store in refrigerator for up to 4-5 days.

Nutrition:

1/2 cup canned **sweet potato**

- Counts as 1/2 cup of vegetables in MyPlate.
- Provides your daily Vitamin A recommendation.

Uses:

- Serve heated or use in a variety of soups or baked goods (e.g., pies, breads, muffins).
- Add flavor other nutrients by mixing in raisins, canned pineapple (drained), or nuts.

Spot food spoilage to stay safe!

Food spoilage is the number one cause of foodborne illness in family homes. Spoilage happens when a food has been contaminated by bacteria and becomes unsafe to eat. Foods that are susceptible to spoilage are milk, cheese, meat, fruits, vegetables, and leftovers.

**Remember,
when in doubt
throw it out!**

What are signs of food spoilage?

Foods that spoil often develop unpleasant odors, taste, appearance, and/or textures. Do not eat foods that smell sour or strange, have a slimy/mushy appearance or obvious mold growth.

For more information on how to safely store food, visit <https://bit.ly/3EiMyzD>

Adapted from the U.S. Department on Agriculture "What are the signs of food spoilage?" article, <https://bit.ly/2WHXWDK>

Vegetable Chili with Sweet Potato

Serves: 5 | Serving Size: 2 cups

INGREDIENTS

2 Tbsp vegetable oil
2 Yellow onion (peeled and coarsely chopped)
2 Zucchini (cubed)
2-14oz cans sweet potato (drained and rinsed)
3 cloves garlic (peeled and minced)
2 tsp ground cumin
2 Tbsp chili powder
2 tsp dried oregano
3-16oz cans low sodium dark red kidney beans (drained and rinsed)
2-14.5oz cans low sodium diced tomatoes
2 cups frozen corn (unthawed)

INSTRUCTIONS AND TIPS

1. Put the pot over medium heat. When it is hot, add oil.
2. Add onions, zucchini, sweet potatoes, garlic, and spices. Cook for about 20 minutes, stir occasionally.
3. Add in kidney beans and tomatoes. Stir and cook, covered, until zucchini is tender - ~30 minutes.
4. Add the corn and cook until warmed through.
5. Serve while hot and enjoy!

Tip: Counts as 3 1/4 cup of vegetables in MyPlate

Nutritional analysis (2 cups): 427 calories, 8g fat, 1g saturated fat, 480mg sodium, 78g carbohydrates, 21g fiber, 18g sugar, 20g protein.

This recipe is adapted from <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/myplate-cnpp/vegetable-chili>

Check your Temps!

Optimize the quality of your leftovers by storing them at a safe temperature. Keep track your refrigerator and freezer temperatures by placing a thermometer near the opening edge of the door.

Refrigerator: Keep at 40°F or below. Store cooked leftovers in sealed containers for up to four days.

Freezer: Keep at 0°F or below. Store cooked leftovers in sealed containers for up to a few months.

Helpful Resources

For all your home and family questions, contact the AnswerLine at 800-262-3804.

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