



Soft stool. *Less straining.* Your daily fiber plan for easier bowel movements.

30

Aim for about 30 grams of fiber a day.

Most people do well between 25 and 35 grams.

No weighing, no counting — follow the pattern below and judge by your stool.

The Gut Surgeon 1 • 2 • 2 • 1 Fiber Plan

1 ANCHOR MEAL

Pick breakfast, lunch, or dinner — the meal you eat most consistently. Build at least two fiber-containing foods into that meal.

BREAKFAST ANCHOR

Whole fruit

- + Oatmeal + 1 tbsp chia *or*
- + High-fiber cereal (5 g+) or shredded wheat *or*
- + Whole-wheat toast + nut butter or eggs

LUNCH / DINNER ANCHOR

Salad or veggies

- + Chickpeas, beans, or peas *or*
- + Potato or sweet potato, skin on *or*
- + A second cooked vegetable

Across your whole day — including your anchor meal — aim for **2** whole fruits, **2** vegetables, and **1** fiber booster.

2



WHOLE FRUITS

TWO SERVINGS A DAY

Apples, pears, oranges, berries, prunes — not juice.

2



VEGETABLES

ANY MEAL — COOKED OR RAW

Fist-size portion (about 1 cup) — or 2 handfuls of salad (light on fiber — make the other one heartier).

1



FIBER BOOSTER

ONE A DAY · ABOUT 10 GM

Beans, lentils, or edamame (¾ cup), chia (2 tbsp), bran cereal, raspberries, peas — or psyllium if you can't.

Some foods may count in two places — for example, berries can be one fruit and your booster; peas can be one vegetable and your booster.

Build it gradually START ANYWHERE — ONE NEW HABIT EVERY 4–7 DAYS



First fruit — every day, skin on when you can. Start psyllium: 1 teaspoon in a full glass (page 2).



Anchor meal — lock it in: same meal, most days.



Fiber booster daily — start small if you bloat easily.



Round it out — second fruit or vegetable. Psyllium up if stools are still hard.

Gas in the first two weeks is common — it usually settles. Miserable? Drop back one step. Don't quit.

Missed a box? Patch the fiber with psyllium — 1 teaspoon for a missed fruit or vegetable, 2 for a missed booster, up to 1 tablespoon a day. It patches the fiber, not the food; back to the plan tomorrow.

The anchor meal is a habit, not a number — psyllium can't patch that.

Keep your usual protein. This is a fiber add-on, not a whole-meal plan — meat, fish, eggs, and dairy just have little fiber.

Drink enough fluid every day — it keeps stool soft. On a fluid restriction from your doctor? Follow their limit.



What success *looks like*.

BRISTOL STOOL CHART – LOOK AT THE SHAPE, NOT A GRAM COUNT

Your goal is type 3 or 4. Soft. Formed. Easy to start.



1

Separate hard lumps.
Hard to pass.

2

Sausage-shaped but
lumpy.

Goal
3

Sausage with cracks
on the surface.

Goal
4

Smooth and soft,
like a snake.

5

Soft blobs with clear
edges.

6

Fluffy, ragged pieces.
Mushy.

7

Watery. No solid
pieces.

Adapted from Lewis & Heaton, 1997.

What “straining” means

Yes: gentle pressure, normal breathing, done in a few minutes.

No: breath-holding, pushing again and again, waiting it out.

Under 5 minutes

No phone

Go with the urge

Psyllium

The addition – most days, during treatment

Can't get to your goal? Psyllium fills the gap – it's the booster you can always reach. Once food alone keeps your stool soft and easy, you can taper it off.

The jar must say **psyllium husk** (Metamucil, Konsyl, or store brand) – not gummies.

- **1 teaspoon** (or the label's serving) in a full glass – **never dry**.
- Keep it **2 hours away** from your other medicines.
- Still hard? **2 teaspoons, then up to 1 tablespoon.**
- Works within **1–3 days**. Judge the routine over **2–4 weeks**.

Fiber without water is cement – drink plenty all day.

At the store – skip these

- ✗ **Wheat-dextrin powders** (check the ingredient) – little softening gel.
- ✗ **Inulin or chicory-root gummies** – gas, almost no bulk.
- ✗ **Fiber pills** with tiny doses.

Packaged food: **3 g fiber per serving is useful · 5 g+ is excellent.** Read the **Dietary Fiber** line – ignore the front of the bag.

Ask your clinician first: trouble swallowing · narrowing or blockage · recent bowel surgery · fluid restriction

Call your doctor's office if...

- Stool is **soft but you still push**, feel blocked, press around the pelvis, or need a finger to help – more fiber won't fix that.
- Bleeding that is **new, changing, or persistent**.
- Full plan for **4 weeks and still straining** – the next step is a laxative or an emptying check, not more fiber.

Seek urgent care if...

- **No stool or gas** plus belly swelling, pain, or vomiting – do not start fiber.
- **Heavy bleeding**, faintness, or fever with pain.
- **Choking, chest discomfort, or trouble swallowing** right after psyllium.



The full menu — *what counts.*

SUPPLEMENTAL. You don't need this page to succeed — pages 1 and 2 are the plan. Keep this one for when you want the numbers.

FIBER BOOSTERS — ONE A DAY · ABOUT 10 GM EACH (8 TO 12)

Split peas, ¾ cup cooked	12.2 g
Lentils, ¾ cup cooked	11.7 g
Pinto beans, ¾ cup cooked	11.6 g
Black beans, ¾ cup cooked	11.3 g
Chickpeas, ¾ cup cooked	9.4 g
Green peas, 1 cup cooked	8.8 g
Chia seeds, 2 tablespoons	8.2 g
Edamame, 1 cup shelled, cooked	8.1 g
Raspberries or blackberries, 1 cup	8.0 g
Bran cereal, ½ cup (check the label)	8–12 g

EVERYDAY FOODS — FILL THE REST · 3 TO 8 G EACH

Collard greens, 1 cup cooked	7.6 g
Artichoke, 1 medium cooked	6.9 g
Whole-wheat pasta, 1 cup cooked	6.3 g
Pear, 1 medium, skin on	5.5 g
Broccoli, 1 cup cooked	5.2 g
Quinoa, 1 cup cooked	5.2 g
Baked beans, ½ cup	5.0 g
Avocado, half	5.0 g
Apple, 1 medium, skin on	4.8 g
Carrots, 1 cup cooked	4.8 g
Spinach or kale, 1 cup cooked	4–5 g
Kiwi, 2 green	4.2 g
Chia seeds, 1 tablespoon	4.1 g
Oatmeal, 1 cup cooked	4.0 g
Green beans, 1 cup cooked	4.0 g
Potato or sweet potato, medium, skin on	3.9 g
Whole-wheat bread, 2 slices (check the label)	4–6 g
Blueberries, 1 cup	3.6 g
Corn, 1 cup cooked	3.6 g
Prunes, 5	3.5 g
Banana, 1 medium	3.1 g
Orange, 1 medium	3.1 g
Strawberries, 1 cup halved	3.0 g

FREE UPGRADES

SAME MEALS, MORE FIBER

White bread → 100% whole wheat	+2–3 g
White rice → brown rice	+1–2 g
Juice → the whole fruit	+3–4 g
Chips → air-popped popcorn	+2–3 g
Peeled → skin on apples & potatoes	+1–2 g

A REAL 31-GRAM DAY

BREAKFAST	Apple + oatmeal + 1 tbsp chia	12.9 g
	ANCHOR FRUIT	
LUNCH	Big salad, 2 handfuls VEG	1.5 g
SNACK	Raspberries, 1 cup FRUIT BOOSTER	8.0 g
DINNER	Broccoli, 1 cup VEG	5.2 g
DINNER	Potato, skin on	3.9 g

TOTAL **31.5 g**

Anchor + all of 2:2:1 — and the berries counted twice.

ANOTHER DAY — DINNER ANCHOR

BREAKFAST	Oatmeal, 1 cup	4.0 g
SNACK	Pear, skin on FRUIT	5.5 g
LUNCH	Green beans, 1 cup VEG	4.0 g
SNACK	Orange FRUIT	3.1 g
DINNER	Salad + ¾ cup chickpeas + potato	14.8 g
	ANCHOR VEG BOOSTER	

TOTAL **31.4 g**

2:2:1 complete — with a dinner anchor this time.

EXTRAS — ENJOY, BUT NOT ENOUGH ALONE

Almonds, small handful (1 oz)	3.5 g
Popcorn, 3 cups air-popped	3.5 g
Ground flax, 1 tbsp	2.0 g
Peanut butter, 2 tablespoons	1.6 g
Hummus, 2 tablespoons	1.5 g

Values from USDA / NIDDK food data. Brands vary — the label wins. Fiber only: your usual protein and low-fiber foods aren't shown. Portions are approximate — your plan may be individualized.