



### Focus on Fiber

If fiber is so good for us, should you be buying foods with added fiber? Generally, no. The best fiber is what comes naturally in food.



There are two forms of fiber – soluble and insoluble. Insoluble fiber is not fully digested and adds to intestinal bulk. Soluble fibers are broken down by the bacteria in the gut and are thought to lower cholesterol. They also help keep those same gut bacteria healthy.

Fruits, vegetables (including legumes) and whole grains are our main sources of fiber, and most have both types of fiber. The current recommendation is for 14 grams of fiber per 1,000 calories. Based on a rough estimate of calorie needs, that means young women need 25 grams of fiber and young men need 38 grams. Over 50, the fiber target for women is 21 grams, and for men is 30.

Fiber has a protective effect for the heart. It slows the digestion of carbohydrates, giving less blood sugar fluctuation, and it supports the bacteria that keep our GI system healthy. While fiber has long been thought to protect against colon cancer, recent research makes that less certain. Still the added bulk does help with regularity. AND it is filling, helping you eat less!

**Most Americans get half the recommended levels.** So we do need more fiber in our diets. Food manufacturers are jumping on the band wagon and adding fiber to lots of foods that have not traditionally been sources of fiber, such as ice cream, yogurt and even water. But adding fiber does not automatically make a food healthy. Besides, some types of added fiber may not offer health benefits anyway.



Food companies often add “isolated fiber” like inulin, maltodextrin, oat fiber and polydextrose. These are added to food to increase the fiber content listed on the label, but have questionable nutritional

value. In most cases, they don’t have the same physical effects that whole or intact fiber has.

Whole foods and whole grains come with extras—phytoestrogens, antioxidants, vitamins, minerals and all those new compounds we keep discovering.

Bottom line: Don’t buy food based on its fiber content. Look at the actual ingredients and choose healthy, whole foods. Better yet, if you are eating whole, fresh, real food, there won’t even be a label.

### The Voice in Your Head

Who are you? This is a spiritual question that each of us must answer for ourselves, but I can offer some insight on who you are not! You are not the relentless voice inside your head!

This is important because if we let it, that voice can take over our lives. When the voice is critical of us, and we believe it, it can stop us from living the lives we are capable of.

Even though the voice in our head never stops, we are so used to it that we are not even aware of it most of the time. When that happens, we can automatically believe the message, even though it may not really be true.

When you have thoughts like “I can’t keep up an exercise program” or “I can never stick with my healthy food choices” that is the inner voice. Some call it the saboteur because causes us to doubt ourselves and give up.

As you become aware of it, you can tune in to the messages that the voice gives you. When you can see it for what it is, just a voice, you can separate enough to choose whether to believe it or not. It is true? What else is true?

Each of us has an inner knowing, that tends to run deeper than the relentless mind chatter. It might be hard to turn off the voice, but by ignoring it you can essentially turn down the volume. Then you can access your true wisdom.

### 2% or 1% Milk?

It’s a good advertising campaign: 2% sounds really low! Unfortunately it is not as good as it sounds. Especially when you consider that regular milk is only 3.5% fat. The percentage refers to weight, not calories.

1 cup of 2% milk has 5 grams of fat, compared to 8 grams in regular milk. 1% milk has 2.5 grams of fat, and nonfat milk has none. That makes 1% or nonfat milk better choices.

How important this is depends on how much you use. If you are just adding a little to coffee, then splurge on 2%. But if you are like me and fill your mug 1/3 with milk, try 1%.

**Want Support?** *Many of my clients know what to eat but want support with actually doing it. It helps to have someone help you choose a strategy and stay focused. Sessions range from 30 min by phone to 1-2 hours in person. Call me to discuss what would work best for you.*

### Kathy Nichols: Life Coach & Registered Dietitian

Are you ready to stop dieting and looking for a way of eating that is sustainable, enjoyable and healthy?

*Discover Wellness from the Inside Out!*

