Fiber is the part of plant foods that the body cannot digest. Eating more fiber can help your child prevent constipation, diabetes and heart disease. Foods that contain a lot of fiber are filling, have lots of vitamins and minerals, and help children maintain a healthy weight.

Fiber should be added very gradually to give the body time to adjust. Drinking plenty of fluids helps fiber do its work.

**How much fiber is enough?**
You can find out how much fiber is in food by looking for the “dietary fiber” line of food labels.

**Children ages 3-15 should aim for “age in years plus 5-10 grams” of fiber. Older teen should eat 20-35 grams of fiber a day.**

**FOR EXAMPLE**
an 8-year old should eat
8 grams + 5 to 10 =13 to 18 grams of fiber a day.

Here are some easy ways to add fiber:

- Serve high-fiber cereal like bran flakes, oatmeal, or shredded wheat.
- Add some raisins or berries to breakfast cereal.
- Serve whole fruit instead of juices.
- Eat vegetables that are really high in fiber like carrots, winter squash, broccoli, cauliflower, peas, potatoes and avocado.
- Add a salad to lunch or dinner.
- Eat apples, pears, and potatoes with the peels on.
- Add beans (like kidney or navy beans), chickpeas, or lentils to salads and soups or eat baked beans as a side dish.
- Popcorn makes a great high-fiber snack.
- Fill ⅔ of the lunch or dinner plate with plant-based foods, such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

Adapted from How To Add Fiber to Your Meals by Nutrition Works, LLC © 2008.