



## MORE FIBER IN THE DIET

- ◆ Increase fiber intake gradually. Be sure to drink at least 8 cups of water per day.

- ◆ Include beans/legumes in at least 2 or 3 of your meals per week. Easy ideas include vegetarian chili, split pea soup, pasta topped with marinara sauce and lentils, minestrone soup and pasta bean soup.

- ◆ Include fruit in at least 2 of your meals and snacks per day.

- ◆ Include vegetables in at least 2 of your meals and snacks per day.

### FIBER IS GOOD FOR YOU

Fiber can:

- ◆ Decrease risk of heart disease: Soluble fiber (found in oats, barley, legumes) lowers blood cholesterol levels.
- ◆ Help with weight control: High fiber foods tend to be lower in fat, plus they fill you up quickly.
- ◆ Protect against cancer: While the debate on fiber's link to colon cancer continues, a diet focused on fiber-rich fruits, vegetables and whole grains may



help fight off disease.

- ◆ Lower risk of developing diabetes: Keeping your weight down with a high fiber, low fat intake decreases your risk of diabetes.

- ◆ Keep your intestinal tract healthy: From constipation to hemorrhoids to diverticulosis, fiber is the key to intestinal health.

### INCREASE FIBER

Fiber is found in:

- ◆ Beans & legumes such as black beans, lentils, pinto beans, Great Northern beans, split peas, red beans, kidney beans.
- ◆ Fruits such as apples, pears, berries, melons, citrus, grapes.
- ◆ Vegetables such as carrots, potatoes, sweet potatoes, corn, green beans, broccoli, celery, turnips, tomatoes, lettuce.
- ◆ Whole grains such as whole wheat breads and pastas, whole grain cereals, brown rice, barley, oatmeal. Look for package claims such as 100% whole grain or read the ingredient list to be sure whole

grains are at the top of the list.

- ◆ Nuts and seeds such as almonds, walnuts, pecans, sunflower seeds, sesame seeds, poppy seeds.

## MARCH IS PEANUT MONTH

Peanuts and peanut butter is not just for kids. Even though peanuts are relatively high in fat and calories they also are a rich source of nutrients. In small amounts peanuts can be a part of a healthy diet.

Americans love peanuts, we eat about 6.5 pounds per person each year, about half of it as peanut butter.

Peanuts are not actually nuts, but a part of the legumes and beans family. Like beans they are a good source of protein and fiber.

### Healthy ways to eat peanuts

- ◆ Add peanuts to a stir-fry.
- ◆ Add peanuts to cooked vegetables for crunch.
- ◆ Sprinkle peanuts on salads.
- ◆ Add peanuts for flavor and crunch to hot or cold cereal.
- ◆ Add chopped peanuts to cookies, muffins, breads, cakes, pancakes or waffles.
- ◆ Sprinkle chopped peanuts on low-fat yogurt.

## CORN CHOWDER

- 1 cup frozen spinach
- ½ cup brown rice
- 1 cup frozen corn kernels
- 1 cup chopped bell pepper
- 2 cups low-sodium tomato juice or vegetable broth
- 2 cups water
- dash hot pepper sauce

Combine all ingredients in a large pan. Bring to a boil over high heat then lower to a simmer. Cover and cook on low until rice is done and veggies are tender, around 25 or 30 minutes. Stir occasionally.

Serves 6

Nutrition Info per serving:

- Fat 5 g
- Carbohydrate 24 g
- Fiber 3 g
- Protein 4 g

Prepared by: Barbara Farner  
Extension Educator  
Nutrition & Wellness  
Matteson Center

