- Nutrition

Fibre – the lifesaving nutrient

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IT is well known that eating fibre can prevent constipation, but did you know it can also lower your risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and bowel cancer?

Dietary fibre can only be found in foods that come from plants, such as wholegrain cereals, wholemeal bread, wholemeal pasta, brown rice, fruit, vegetables, beans, and lentils.

Here we provide some tips to help you increase the amount of fibre in your diet.

Choose a variety

Obtaining fibre from a variety of food sources is a great way to ensure a healthy balanced diet. It is also important to make sure you are drinking enough fluid to help fibre function properly.

Opt for a high-fibre cereal

Look out for cereals that are labelled as "whole grain" or with "bran" or "fibre" in their name. Try to choose plain varieties with no added sugars.

Switch to wholemeal

Instead of white bread, white rice and white pasta, try switching to wholemeal or granary bread, brown rice and wholemeal pasta.

Eat your five a day

Frozen, dried and tinned fruit and vegetables all count towards this. Try eating apples and potatoes with their skins still on, to further increase fibre intake.

Add extra vegetables or pulses to your favourite meals

Beans, lentils and chickpeas can be added to your favourite meals like curries, bolognese, chilli, soups and stews, to bulk them out and add nutrients.

Snack wisely

Choose unsalted nuts and seeds, fresh fruit, vegetable sticks or oatcakes.

Some people worry that if they increase their fibre intake it will cause them to suffer from flatulence (wind).

To avoid this, you should gradually increase the amount of fibre in your diet to allow your body time to adjust.

Good luck.