

# Fiber from Foods & Psyllium Husk: Why It Matters for Gut, Hormones, and Detox

Most people don't realize that fiber is one of the most powerful and underrated tools for healing. It supports digestion, hormones, detox, blood sugar, and even brain health.

This handout breaks down why fiber matters, where to get it, and how to use **food-based fiber and psyllium husk** effectively.

## What Is Fiber—and Why Is It So Important?

Fiber is a type of carbohydrate your body *can't* digest. Instead, it travels through your gut and plays a powerful role in:

- Sweeping out toxins
- Feeding healthy gut bacteria (your microbiome)
- Supporting healthy bowel movements
- Balancing hormones like estrogen
- Controlling blood sugar and cholesterol
- Reducing inflammation and cravings

Without enough fiber, the gut slows down, hormones recirculate improperly, detox pathways back up, and inflammation rises.

## Two Main Types of Fiber (You Need Both!)

| Type            | What It Does  | Found In   |
|-----------------|---|--|
| Soluble Fiber   | Turns into a gel, slows digestion, stabilizes blood sugar, lowers cholesterol | Oats, chia seeds, flax, apples, beans, psyllium husk |
| Insoluble Fiber | Adds bulk, helps move waste through the gut, supports regularity              | Leafy greens, vegetables, brown rice, nuts, seeds    |

## Top Whole-Food Sources of Fiber

These are nutrient-dense, healing foods that provide both soluble and insoluble fiber:

| Food                        | Fiber per serving |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Lentils (1 cup cooked)      | 15g               |
| Black beans (1 cup)         | 15g               |
| Chia seeds (1 tbsp)         | 5g                |
| Flaxseeds (1 tbsp)          | 3g                |
| Avocado (1 medium)          | 10g               |
| Berries (1 cup raspberries) | 8g                |
| Oats (½ cup dry)            | 4g                |
| Sweet potato (1 medium)     | 4g                |
| Broccoli (1 cup)            | 5g                |

✓ Aim to eat at least **6–10 servings of plant-based fiber daily**, from a variety of sources.

## Functional Medicine Reasons to Prioritize Fiber

- **Hormone Balance** – Fiber helps eliminate excess estrogen and other hormone byproducts
- **Gut Support** – Fiber feeds beneficial bacteria and helps reduce leaky gut
- **Blood Sugar Control** – Soluble fiber slows glucose absorption
- **Mitochondrial & Detox Support** – Promotes elimination of toxins through regular bowel movements

## What Is Psyllium Husk—and Why Use It?

**Psyllium husk** is a powerful soluble fiber derived from the *Plantago ovata* seed. It's like a sponge that absorbs water, toxins, and waste in your gut.

It's especially helpful when:

- You're not getting enough fiber from food
- You need a gentle way to improve bowel movements
- You want extra support for cholesterol, detox, or hormone balance

### Benefits of Psyllium Husk:

- Promotes daily, complete bowel movements
- Binds to excess estrogen and cholesterol
- Stabilizes post-meal blood sugar
- Feeds good gut bacteria (prebiotic effect)
- Helps reduce bloating, cravings, and reactivity

## How to Use Psyllium Husk Safely

| Step               | Tip   |
|--------------------|---|
| Start slow         | Begin with ½–1 tsp in 8–12 oz water once daily      |
| Hydrate            | Drink plenty of water throughout the day            |
| Timing             | Take at least 30 mins away from meds or supplements |
| Increase gradually | Work up to 1 tbsp/day if tolerated                  |

Too much too quickly may cause gas or bloating—ease in gently.

## How Much Fiber Do You Need?

- **Women:** 25–30g/day
- **Men:** 30–38g/day
- **Therapeutic goal:** Up to 40g/day (under practitioner guidance)

Tip: Count grams per day from both **whole foods + psyllium husk** for optimal gut and hormone health.

## **Remember: Fiber Supports More Than Digestion**

In functional medicine, fiber plays a critical role in:

- Detox and elimination
- Hormone clearance
- Gut microbiome balance
- Immune modulation
- Brain and mood health

It's one of the simplest and most effective tools you can use daily to feel better, think clearer, and heal faster.