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The Five Fiber Signals Plan

For anyone whose digestion, appetite or bloodwork has drifted and who has not looked at fiber yet. Every line below restates a claim verified against Tier-1 medical sources. Nothing here is invented, and nothing is for sale.

✓ CHECKED AGAINST MAYO CLINIC · CLEVELAND CLINIC

1

Almost nobody hits the target

Cleveland Clinic reports only about 5 percent of US adults get enough fiber, with most people eating around 16 grams a day. (Cleveland Clinic)

2

The target itself is modest

Mayo Clinic cites the National Academy of Medicine: 21 to 25 grams a day for women and 30 to 38 grams for men, depending on age. (Mayo Clinic)

3

Two fibers, two different jobs

Mayo Clinic separates soluble fiber, which can lower cholesterol and blood sugar, from insoluble fiber, which moves material through and adds bulk to stool. (Mayo Clinic)

1. Count one ordinary day first

You cannot fix a gap you have not measured.

WHY THIS WORKS

Cleveland Clinic puts typical intake near 16 grams a day against recommendations of 22 to 34 grams depending on age and sex, and notes only about 5 percent of adults clear the bar. One honest tally of a normal day tells you whether you are near the target or half of it, and it takes ten minutes.

SOURCE: CLEVELAND CLINIC

DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Write down everything you eat for one ordinary day
- ☐ Add up the fiber grams from the labels
- ☐ Compare the total against 22 to 34 grams
- ☐ Repeat on a weekend day, which usually looks different

2. Read the five signals honestly

Constipation is the loud one. Four others are quieter.

WHY THIS WORKS

Mayo Clinic links low fiber to constipation because fiber increases the weight and size of stool and softens it. Mayo also notes soluble fiber may keep the body from absorbing some cholesterol and may slow the absorption of sugar, and that high-fiber foods are more filling and take longer to eat. Those are the four quiet signals alongside the obvious one.

SOURCE: MAYO CLINIC

DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Note whether stools are hard or infrequent
- ☐ Note whether you are hungry again soon after meals
- ☐ Check your last LDL cholesterol result
- ☐ Note how you feel one to two hours after a starchy meal

3. Close the gap with food first

Whole foods carry more than fiber.

WHY THIS WORKS

Mayo Clinic states plainly that whole foods are generally better for you than fiber supplements, because supplements do not provide the variety of fiber, vitamins, minerals and other nutrients whole foods do. Legumes, whole grains,

DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Choose a breakfast cereal with 5 grams of fiber or more
- ☐ Make at least half your grains whole grains
- ☐ Add beans or lentils to one meal a day
- ☐ Keep the skins on fruit and vegetables

fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds are the four aisles that do the work.

SOURCE: MAYO CLINIC

4. Ramp slowly and drink water

The mistake that makes people quit fiber is speed.

WHY THIS WORKS

Cleveland Clinic advises adding no more than 5 grams of fiber per week until you reach your goal, because adding too much at once causes bloating and cramping. Mayo adds that fiber works best when it absorbs water, which is what makes stool soft and easier to pass, so water goes up with fiber.

SOURCE: CLEVELAND CLINIC

DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Add no more than 5 grams of fiber per week
- ☐ Increase water as you increase fiber
- ☐ Give each step a week before adding more
- ☐ Back off a step if gas or cramping arrives

5. Know when less fiber is the right answer

This plan does not apply to everyone.

WHY THIS WORKS

Mayo Clinic lists situations where a clinician may ask you to eat less fiber, not more: after certain intestinal surgeries, during flares of Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis, during a bout of diverticulitis, with narrowed intestines, during some radiation therapy, with gastroparesis, and while preparing for a colonoscopy. If any of those describe you, this is a conversation with your clinician, not a shopping decision.

SOURCE: MAYO CLINIC

DO THIS WEEK

- ☐ Flag any inflammatory bowel diagnosis to your clinician
- ☐ Do not raise fiber during an active flare
- ☐ Follow colonoscopy prep instructions exactly
- ☐ Ask before starting any fiber supplement

EVERY CLAIM ABOVE, TRACED TO ITS SOURCE

Mayo Clinic, Dietary fiber: Essential for a healthy diet · https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/fiber/art-20043983

Cleveland Clinic, Your Fiber Intake: What's the Right Amount? · https://health.clevelandclinic.org/how-much-fiber-per-day

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Ageless Coach · agelesscoach.com · July 2026