

## Answer to the question #47431 –Biology –Biochemistry

### What is fiber?

#### Answer

Fiber is that part of plant foods that your body can't digest or absorb. It is also referred to as roughage or bulk. This definition includes lignin and polysaccharides. The definition was later changed to also include resistant starch, along with inulin and other oligosaccharides. Official definition of dietary fiber differs a little among different institutions:

<b>Organization (reference)</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Institute of Medicine	Dietary fiber consists of nondigestible carbohydrates and lignin that are intrinsic and intact in plants. Functional fiber consists of isolated, nondigestible carbohydrates that have beneficial physiologic effects in humans. Total fiber is the sum of dietary fiber and functional fiber.
American Association of Cereal Chemists	Dietary fiber is the edible parts of plants or analogous carbohydrates that are resistant to digestion and absorption in the human small intestine, with complete or partial fermentation in the large intestine. Dietary fiber includes polysaccharides, oligosaccharides, lignin, and associated plant substances. Dietary fibers promote beneficial physiologic effects including laxation, and/or blood cholesterol attenuation, and/or blood glucose attenuation.
Codex Alimentarius Commission	Dietary fiber means carbohydrate polymers with $\geq 10$ monomeric units, which are not hydrolyzed by the endogenous enzymes in the small intestine of humans.

Many of the health problems we face start from a poor or sluggish digestion caused from built-up waste material in our colon. Fiber helps digest and pass the foods we eat. By increasing our fiber intake, we decrease the risks of common diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity.