

# Live Healthy Georgia – Seniors Taking Charge!



**Happy Halloween**

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## The Bulk Behind Fiber

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Also called “roughage” or “bulk”, **dietary fiber is the plant parts that your body cannot digest or absorb.** The fibers of a plant generally form the supporting structures such as the leaves, stems, and seeds. Fiber is a complex carbohydrate, but diabetics do not need to be wary. Our bodies lack the digestive enzymes to break down fiber, so **most fiber passes through the human body without providing energy for its use.** So what’s the point? High fiber diets tend to make a meal feel larger and linger longer so you feel fuller longer. Also, high fiber foods require more chewing time, which gives your body time to register that it is full, so you’re less likely to overeat. Fiber provides minimal amounts of calories as well. All of these benefits together are the reason a high fiber diet can help with weight maintenance or weight loss.

### Two Groups

Fiber is generally divided into two groups: soluble and insoluble. **Soluble** fibers easily dissolve in water and become viscous. This type of fiber is easily fermented by the good

bacteria that resides in the human colon. These fibers are commonly found in barley, legumes (such as beans and peas), fruits, oats, and vegetables. **Insoluble** fibers do not dissolve in water, and are less readily fermented in the colon. These fibers are found in the outer layers of whole grains, wheat bran, nuts, and many vegetables.

### Health Benefits

Soluble fibers slow the transit of food through the upper gastrointestinal tract and also help absorb and hold moisture in stools, softening them. It can help lower cholesterol by binding bile and removing it through elimination, making your body draw from cholesterol stores. Soluble fibers also slow glucose absorption, which helps with glucose control. Insoluble fiber increases fecal weight and speeds fecal passage through the colon. This can help alleviate constipation. By increasing fecal bulk, the digestive tract is stimulated. This can help lower risk of digestive tract disorders such as diverticulosis, hemorrhoids, and appendicitis.

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## Drink Plenty of Fluids

Without water, a high fiber diet may cause constipation. Drinking water with meals and in-between meals will help ensure that you're getting plenty of fluids.

## Dietary Reference Intakes for Total Fiber:

Males 50+ years    30 grams/day  
Females 50+ years    21 grams/day

The American Dietetic Association and the American Cancer Society suggests 20-35 grams of fiber daily.

## Pumpkin Oatmeal Muffins

### Ingredients:

- 1 box spiced cake mix (dry)
- 1 can pumpkin
- ½ cup water
- 2 cups oatmeal (plain, dry)



### Preparation:

1. Combine dry cake mix, pumpkin, water, and oatmeal in bowl
2. Stir until mixed
3. Spoon batter into greased or lined muffin tins

