Two Kinds of Fiber

Soluble and insoluble fiber do different jobs. Here's what each does and where to find it.

Fiber is the part of plant foods your body can't digest. It comes in two kinds, split by whether it **dissolves in water**. Most fiber-rich foods have some of both, but each leans one way. Aim for about **14 g of total fiber per 1,000 calories** and get it from a mix of foods.

THE SPONGE

Soluble

Dissolves in water and turns into a gel.

WHAT IT DOES

- Slows digestion, so carbs hit your blood more slowly
- Helps lower LDL (“bad”) cholesterol
- Keeps you full longer and feeds your gut bacteria

WHERE TO FIND IT

- **Oats**
- **Monggo and beans**
- **Okra (the slimy part)**
- **Kamote**
- **Apples and citrus**
- **Ground flaxseed**

THE BROOM

Insoluble

Doesn't dissolve. Passes through mostly whole.

WHAT IT DOES

- Adds bulk and keeps you regular
- Speeds food through your gut
- Fills you up for very few calories

WHERE TO FIND IT

- **Kangkong, malunggay, spinach**
- **Sitaw, ampalaya, talong**
- **Brown rice and whole wheat**
- **Chia seeds**
- **Almonds and other nuts**
- **Fruit and vegetable skins**

Chia seeds · 2 tbsp ≈ 10 g fiber

Mostly insoluble (85–93%). Forms a gel in liquid.

Flaxseed, ground · 2 tbsp ≈ 4 g fiber

About a quarter soluble. Grind it, or it passes through whole.

START SLOW

Add fiber a little at a time over a couple of weeks and drink more water as you go. A big jump all at once can mean bloating and discomfort.

Sources: Mayo Clinic, Dietary fiber: essential for a healthy diet; Medical News Today; seed fiber splits from published nutrition data. General education only, not medical or dietary advice.