Dietary fiber has heart health benefits, too

Beyond bran…

We're all pretty familiar with how dietary fiber can keep our digestive system functioning like it should. What many people don't realize is that fiber also provides other health benefits, such as helping maintain a healthy heart.

Eating the recommended amounts of dietary fiber can help lower cholesterol and high blood pressure, and help prevent obesity, which are all risk factors in developing heart disease. Use these tips to increase your daily fiber intake:

- Eat more fruits and vegetables — at least 2 cups of fruit and 2 cups of vegetables a day

- Choose a variety of fiber sources such as berries, oatmeal, beans, whole grain bread and cereal

- Serve meat entrees on a bed of grilled zucchini, sautéed spinach or sliced onions

- Snack on air-popped popcorn, dry-roasted nuts and seeds

BlueCross BlueShield of Illinois

Source: American Dietetic Association

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