

High-fiber food advice welcomed by older people, finds study

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Older adults are willing to up the fiber in their diet, but need help, a new study has shown.

Researchers at the University of Reading have suggested an effective strategy for improving dietary fiber intake among the UK's aging population. Currently, most people in the UK eat less fiber than is

recommended, with potential implications for [public health](#) and personal well-being.

Published in the journal [Appetite](#), the new study shows how creating information and materials, with the help of older adults themselves, can successfully promote fiber consumption in this age group.

A higher fiber [diet](#) is known to have benefits for digestion, heart health, diabetes risk and more.

Dr. Stella Lignou, Associate Professor in Sensory and Consumer Science at the University of Reading, said, "We found that many older people didn't know what the guidelines were, nor the benefits that are higher-fiber diet could bring.

"But we saw that this group were very keen to learn more if given clear, accessible information in suitable formats."

The researchers worked with more than 150 UK adults aged 65 and over to develop two tailored fiber-focused materials—a factsheet and practical tips brochure.

Content highlighted recommendations, benefits, [food sources](#) and meal ideas using visuals and straightforward language.

Dr. Vic Norton, University of Reading, co-author of the study, said, "The materials strongly resonated with participants, who agreed they learned a lot and would aim to boost fiber in their everyday diet.

"This participatory approach shows great promise as a simple, low-cost tactic to improve older adults' nutrition and potentially their health."

The researchers suggest that the information should be shared through

GPs, community centers, and supermarkets to reach more [older adults](#), and that the [food industry](#) should be encouraged to produce more high-fiber options.

Follow-up research is needed to see if extra education leads to actual higher intakes of fiber over time, but the researchers believe that with some focused effort on awareness and accessibility, fiber intakes of [older people](#) in the UK can meet recommendations.

More information: Victoria Norton et al, Fibre4life: Investigating older adults dietary fibre preferences and the role of targeted educational materials on modulating future dietary fibre intake, *Appetite* (2023).
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Provided by University of Reading

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