Eating a diet rich in fiber provides a wealth of health benefits. It can help you:

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Lower cholesterol and prevent heart disease
- Control blood sugar and lower your risk for type 2 diabetes
- Prevent colon cancer

What is fiber?
Dietary fiber, once called roughage, is a plant-based nutrient that doesn’t completely break down in digestion. It gives plants their shape and structure the same way bone does for humans and animals.

There are two types of dietary fiber. Soluble fiber, which dissolves in water, helps lower cholesterol and control blood sugar. It is found in oats, citrus fruits, beans and peas. Insoluble fiber does not dissolve in water. It helps digestion and lowers the risk of some cancers. It is found in wheat, vegetables, fruits, beans and peas.

How much fiber?
Adults should have about 25-35 grams of fiber daily, or about an ounce. Although it is easy to increase your dietary fiber, Americans typically get less than half the recommended daily amount.

Sources of fiber
You can readily find fiber-rich foods. Food categories richest in fiber include vegetables, beans and legumes, fruits, grains, nuts and seeds. Options include:

- Broccoli, cooked, 5g/cup
- Celery, raw, 8g/cup
- Black beans, cooked, 15g/cup
- Lentils, cooked, 16 g/cup
- Apple with skin, medium, 4g
- Orange, medium, 3g
- Brown rice, cooked, 4g/cup
- Quinoa, cooked, 5g/cup
- Almonds, 3.5g/ounce
- Sunflower seeds, 16g/cup

Although raw vegetables and fruit have the best fiber nutrients, proper cooking can preserve much of the food’s fiber content. To avoid fiber loss, cook most vegetables, grains and fruits until they are tender and firm, not mushy.
FIT SOME FIBER INTO YOUR DIET

Make wise choices throughout the day
- For breakfast, try bran cereal with banana or oatmeal with raisins.
- For lunch, fill a salad with carrots, broccoli, chickpeas and sunflower seeds. If you prefer sandwiches, choose a whole-grain bread.
- A dinnertime casserole could include grains like quinoa, wheat bran or bulgar. And load up your plate with extra vegetables.
- Snacks could include whole-grain muffins or crackers, veggies with hummus or a piece of fruit.

Eat slowly
High-fiber foods need more chewing and take more time to eat. Thorough chewing breaks food into smaller pieces and makes it easier to digest. By eating more slowly, you’ll experience feelings of fullness and will be less likely to overeat.

Increase fiber intake gradually
Go easy as you increase the amount of fiber in your diet. This will reduce gas and bloating while you adjust to new foods.

Learn more about health and wellness at kucancercenter.org or call 913-588-1227.

Try this fiber-rich recipe!

Quinoa and Black Bean Salad
One serving provides 10 grams of fiber, about a third of your daily quota. Makes 6 servings.

Ingredients
- 2 cups uncooked quinoa
- 3½ cups water
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro
- 5 green onions, sliced
- 1 red bell pepper, small, diced
- 2 cups canned black beans, rinsed
- 1 cup mango, diced (fresh or thawed frozen)
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- ½ cup fresh lime juice
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- ¼ tsp. cayenne pepper
- 1½ tsp. sea salt

Cook quinoa according to package instructions.
Place cooked quinoa in a large bowl to cool.
For the dressing, combine olive oil, lime juice, cumin and sea salt in small bowl. Whisk together and pour over cooled quinoa, and toss well with fork.
Add cilantro, green onions, peppers, mango and black beans. Toss again.

Nutrition info per serving
- 391 calories, 10g dietary fiber, 13.1g total fat, 1.8g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 0mg cholesterol, 505mg sodium, 57.5g total carbs, 5g sugars, 13.7g protein, 52.6mg calcium, 649mg potassium