

GET HEALTHY:

BEANS FOR YOUR HEALTH

Landmark partners with clients, such as health plans and other care delivery systems, to bring house calls and care coordination to patients living with multiple chronic conditions. We're working to help patients stay well at home and receive in-place urgent care when needed. For more information about Landmark please visit: www.landmarkhealth.org

Get healthy by eating beans today!

Research shows that healthiest and longest living communities regularly eat beans, peas, and lentils.¹

**Eat ¼ - ½ cup of beans
with each meal.
Aim for beans at 2-3
meals per day.**

Beans, peas and lentils

Beans, peas, and lentils are an excellent source of:

- protein
- antioxidants
- vitamins and minerals
- dietary fiber
- phytonutrients

Beans are flavorful, affordable and nutritionally dense. Beans help to stabilize blood sugar levels, suppress the appetite, and help keep you full.

In addition, beans can help to protect against diabetes, reduce the risk of heart disease and hypertension, lower cholesterol, and protect against certain cancers. Studies show that eating beans at one meal can help lower blood sugar throughout the day. This means eating beans for breakfast will lower your blood sugars at both breakfast and lunch. This is called *the second meal effect*.^{2,3} For best results, eat beans multiple times every day.

Beans provide valuable nutrition

One cup of beans contains approximately:

- 15-20 grams of fiber (mostly soluble, which lowers cholesterol and heart disease risk)
- 16 grams of protein (the same as 2 ounces of chicken)
- More antioxidants than a cup of blueberries
- Iron, calcium, potassium, magnesium, vitamin A, and folate
- No sodium or added sugars (sugar, syrup, etc.)
- Only 1 gram of fat
- No cholesterol, saturated fat, or trans fat



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How can you add more beans to your diet?

- Put beans on baked potatoes, toast, or salad.
- Make bean burritos, bean tacos, or beans and rice.
- Try bean soups or add beans to a minestrone soup.
- Eat bean spread with veggies sticks or add bean spread to sandwiches or wraps.
- Make a three-bean salad, bean pasta, and/or mix beans with marinara sauces for pasta.
- Snack on dried beans (such as roasted chickpeas).
- Make lentil soup and eat with rice or pour over toasted bread with salad.
- Experiment with a chickpea curry, or lentil dahl.
- Add edamame beans to your stir fry.
- Make bean-based sloppy joes or bean torta sandwiches.
- Eat green peas or lima beans; they count as beans too!

Instructions to cook dry beans

- **Sort**
Sort beans to pick out any shriveled or broken beans or debris.
- **Rinse**
Rinse the sorted beans in a colander with cold, running water.
- **Soak**
Soaking beans before cooking can help to reduce stomach indigestion and gas.
 - Regular soak: Cover beans with 2 to 3 inches of cool, clean water. Set aside at room temperature (or in the refrigerator) for 8–12 hours; drain well.
 - Quick soak: Put beans into a pot and cover with 2–3 inches of water. Bring to a boil for 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat, cover, and soak for 1 hour; drain well.
- **Cook**
Put beans into a large pot and cover with 2 inches of water or stock. (Don't add salt until 1 hour into cooking). Slowly bring to a boil, skimming off surface foam. Reduce heat, cover and simmer, stirring occasionally and adding more liquid if necessary, until beans are tender when mashed. Cooking times vary with the variety, age and size of beans. Generally, it takes about 1 to 2 hours.
- **Crockpot**
Put sorted and rinsed beans in crockpot and cover with 2–3 inches of water or stock. Cook on high for 8 hours.

How to avoid gas from beans

It's no secret that beans, although delicious and healthy, can cause gas. To reduce gas from beans, try these easy tips:

- **Discard the soaking water.**

By discarding beans' soaking water prior to cooking, you're getting rid of up to 80% of the problem. If you soak dry beans, discard the water and cook in fresh water. Once beans are cooked, rinse all the juice off. With canned beans, discard the can water and rinse them thoroughly.

- **Let your body adjust.**

If you don't eat beans often, your body never fully adapts to the extra work required to digest them. Begin by eating $\frac{1}{4}$ cup at a time, and gradually increase the quantity. Over time, you will develop the beneficial bacteria in your gut that helps to digest beans. Some beans are easier to digest, such as lentils, black-eyed peas, lima beans, white beans, and chickpeas.

- **Add something extra.**

Certain ingredients such as a few bay leaves, a pinch of cumin, ginger, coriander, turmeric, or fennel have gas-reducing properties when added to beans while they cook. Simply remove after cooking.

- **Go simple.**

Beans cooked with added sweeteners such as brown sugar, honey or maple syrup may stress your digestion even more.

- **Get a little help.**

Look for digestive enzymes in supplement stores or natural grocery stores. Sprinkle on cooked beans or take in tablet form with your first bite.

- **If problems persist after 3 or more weeks,** consult your Landmark provider.

Resources

1. Darmadi-Blackberry, M. Wahlqvist, A. Kouris-Blazos, et al. Legumes: the most important dietary predictor of survival in older people of different ethnicities. *Asia Pac J Clin Nutr.* 2004;13(2):217-20.
2. R. C. Mollard, C. L. Wong, B. L. Luhovyy, G. H. Anderson. First and second meal effects of pulses on blood glucose, appetite, and food intake at a later meal. *Appl Physiol Nutr Metab* 2011 36(5):634 - 642
3. D. J. Jenkins, T. M. Wolever, R. H. Taylor, H. M. Barker, H. Fielden. Exceptionally low blood glucose response to dried beans: Comparison with other carbohydrate foods. *Br Med J* 1980 281(6240):578 - 580

If you have any questions or concerns, contact your Landmark provider or primary care physician.

The information provided herein is intended for your general knowledge only and is not a substitute for professional medical advice or treatment for specific medical conditions. You should not use this information to diagnose or treat a health problem or disease without consulting with a qualified healthcare provider. Please consult your healthcare provider with any questions or concerns you may have regarding your condition.



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