

# Resistant Starch



## What is resistant starch

Starches are a type of carbohydrate. Carbohydrates provide the body with glucose, which is the main energy source for every cell. Starches can be found in many foods, including grains, some vegetables, and fruits. While most starches are digested and broken down, resistant starch “resists” being digested. Resistant starch is also a type of fiber. It passes through your stomach and small intestine and stays longer in your large intestine to feed the gut’s “good” bacteria.



Whole grains are some of the foods that provide resistant starch.

## Benefits of resistant starch

A high fiber diet that has high amounts of resistant starches has many benefits. It can help your digestive system by helping you have regular bowel movements. It may also help to decrease blood cholesterol, improve glucose control in diabetes, and control weight. Research also suggests that resistant starch may play a role in preventing colon cancer and upper GI (gastrointestinal) cancers.<sup>1</sup>

## Resistant starch content in food can change

The amount of resistant starches in foods can be more or less based by how we prepare and store them. Here are some examples.

- Heating reduces the amount of resistant starch in some foods. Oats, green bananas, and plantains lose some of their resistant starch when cooked.
- Cooking and then cooling foods such as oats, beans, peas, and lentils adds more resistant starch than cooking alone.
- Fruits can lose their resistant starch as they ripen. Bananas, for example, are a good source of resistant starch while still green. This lessens as they turn a ripe yellow.

## Tips to increase resistant starch in your diet

Some ways to increase the resistant starch in your diet include:

- Eat uncooked oats soaked in milk and yogurt (called overnight oats).
- Eat foods that have resistant starch when refrigerated, such as rice, potato, beans, and pasta.
- Eat unripe (green) bananas.

- Add raw potato starch to food or drinks. You can find raw potato starch at some grocery stores or online. Bob's Red Mill is one example of a brand you can look for.
- Try adding plantain flour or green banana flour to your foods or drinks. Try looking online for where to buy this.
- Add beans to salads and try more bean dips. Examples include pinto, black, garbanzo (chickpeas), white (cannellini), and soy beans.
- Other foods that are higher in resistant starch are:
  - Lentils
  - Tortillas
  - Green peas
  - Pearl barley
  - Pumpernickel bread
  - White pita bread

## Start slow

Slowly increasing the amount of resistant starch in your diet can help prevent bloating or abdominal discomfort as your body adjusts.

- Start by adding small amounts of resistant starch and increase this slowly to see how it goes.
- Watch for changes in your digestion, such as bloating, constipation, and abdominal cramping.

1. Mathers, John C., et al. "Cancer prevention with resistant starch in Lynch syndrome patients in the CAPP2-randomized placebo controlled trial: planned 10-year follow-up." *Cancer prevention research* (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1158/1940-6207.CAPR-22-0044>.

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