

Why Do We Need Fiber?

Fiber is derived from the cell walls of plants. In recent years, the absence of sufficient quantities of dietary fiber has been recognized as one of the most significant causes of ill health particularly in Western countries. Some of the disease linked to a lack of dietary fiber are extremely serious or are a cause of severe discomfort and pain. Also, while some are directly linked to the digestive tract, others affect other body systems and organs so that a lack of dietary fiber can have far-reaching consequences.



All fiber is not the same. And, if you are part of the 10 to 20 percent of adults in the western countries who have irritable bowel syndrome, it is especially important to know the difference.

Soluble fibers slows the digestion of food, giving the body time to absorb nutrients. It prolongs the time food stays in the stomach, helping sugar to be released and absorbed more slowly into your systems. Soluble fiber foods are those as starches, like oatmeal, barley, rice cereals, corn meal, and potatoes and is also found in carrots, yams, sweet potatoes, turnips, beets, squash, pumpkins, mushrooms, chestnuts, avocados, bananas, oranges, applesauce and mangos.

Insoluble fiber passes through your body largely intact, increasing the the speed at which food moves through the stomach and intestines. Most of the foods people think of as high in fiber, such as whole wheat, bran products, and raw, leafy vegetables, are actually high in insoluble fiber. As food are becoming more and more refined, these valuable properties are lost to us.

In the September 2005 edition of the Journal of the American Dietetic Association, researchers studied the eating habits of adults between the ages of 20 and 59. In this review, it was noted that only about five percent of those included in the sample consumed an adequate amount of fiber.

It was found that women in particular with the lowest fiber and the highest fat intake had the greatest increase in risk of being overweight or obese, compared to those individuals who consumed a high fiber, low fat diet.

The authors of this study concluded that weight-control advice for women should have a greater emphasis on recommending their consumption of fiber. This recommendation is especially important because more than half of the people who die each year from heart disease are women. And, heart disease is by far the most common cause of death in the western countries.

There have been a number of studies showing the beneficial effects of dietary fiber on body weight.

A particular informative review was published in the Journal Nutrition, March 2005. The author reviewed a series of human studies that were published on dietary fiber and body weight. The indication was that there was strong epidemiologic support that dietary fiber prevented obesity. Fiber intake appeared to be inversely associated with body weight, as well as body fat.

The underlying mechanisms suggested that fiber promoted satiation, decreased absorption of macro-nutrients or in some way altered secretion of gut hormones. The author of this review article also indicated that they average fiber intake of adults in these countries is less than half the recommended levels.

Interestingly, those individuals following low carbohydrate diets such as Atkins and South Beach typically still have lower intake of dietary fiber.

And of course, please don't forget the obvious benefit of adequate fiber intake in regards to reducing the risk of developing tumors in the colon. In addition, adequate fiber intake will help detoxify your body and improve your bowel movements and your overall intestinal health.

The rise of diverticulitis cases throughout the 20th Century closely parallels the rise in consumption of processed foods that are stripped of natural fiber.

This may be a coincidence, but researchers have also found that diverticulitis is most common in industrialized countries where processed foods make up a large part of the diet. When dietary fiber is reduced, the bowels work harder to keep food moving. This puts excess pressure on the colon. Eventually, weak spots on the colon wall develop into diverticulosis pockets.

Treatment of any skin condition is always more effective when the intestinal tract is free of disease-producing fungi. Vegetable fiber is recommended to reduce yeast colonies between your intestinal walls.

Fiber also helps to avoid yeast cells from invading your lymph tract.

More Fiber for Less Breast Cancer

Adding fiber to your diet can reduce your risk of heart disease, diabetes, constipation and possibly, colon cancer. Now a new study from Britain suggests that women who consume 30 grams of fiber daily can cut their risk of breast cancer in half.

The investigators found that the diets of the women diagnosed with breast cancer consisted of more protein, less fiber and less vitamin C than those of the women who didn't develop cancer. You can obtain fiber from bran cereals, beans, vegetables, fruit and whole grains. Ground flaxseed and psyllium seed are also excellent sources.

Your risk of heart disease, diabetes, hypertension and even cancer can rise dramatically by only gaining an additional 15 to 30 pounds. Fiber can help protect us against many illnesses through improved digestive functions and weight management.

Total fiber intake is also important. A high fiber intake ensures an even blood sugar level helping to prevent hypoglycemia and evening out blood sugar levels in diabetics. A high fiber intake also helps you to feel full longer on fewer calories, helping to maintain a healthy body weight.

Heart disease, colon cancer, breast cancer-diseases affecting 30 percent of all people in the western countries over age 50 which can be linked to a 'fast food' or 'westernized' diet. All are linked in one way or another to low fiber intake.

The easy solution to all these problems is to eat more fiber. Ideally, you should try to get at least two servings of both water soluble and water insoluble fiber daily. This translates for most people into eating vegetables at both lunch and dinner every day, as well as having a snack of an apple and replacing sugary cereal with oat bran or oatmeal. It is also important to choose whole grain foods rather than breads and pasta made of white flour. For those with specific diseases, higher





levels of intake are needed. And remember, to prevent fiber from becoming like cement in your gut, you must drink 8 glasses of water each day.

Fiber speeds up the movement of food through the intestinal tract. The faster the food moves through, the less time there is for your body to absorb fats. It also acts as a 'whisk broom' to sweep the small intestines clean, keeping it free from infection in the large colon, it absorbs the toxins being removed from the body.

Source: Just Health Natural Solutions

Email: betipetka@hotmail.com