

The Wellness Express™

Jump on the train to good health



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What You May Not Know About Fiber

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We have heard a lot about how we should get plenty of fiber in our diet. It is good for us, right? But what exactly is fiber and why does it aid our health? What is the difference between soluble fiber and insoluble fiber? Is one better than the other? What foods are the best sources of fiber? And how much do we need each day?

In this issue of Wellness Express™, we look more closely at fiber, the different types, and the research that supports its remarkable health benefits.

Fiber 101

What exactly is fiber? It is a food substance, predominantly found in plants, that cannot be digested by humans. Most fiber materials would be classified as complex carbohydrates. Because it cannot be broken down and absorbed into our bloodstream, fiber moves through our intestines, helping to remove waste and toxins, before being excreted.

Dietary fiber refers to foods with naturally occurring fiber. Functional fiber is fiber added to a food product to boost its content of this substance.



Soluble & Insoluble Fiber

What's the difference? Soluble fiber disperses when mixed with liquid, while insoluble fiber does not. But neither form is digestible.

Sources of *soluble* fiber include:

- apples
- oranges
- carrots
- oats
- dried beans
- barley
- psyllium husk

Sources of *insoluble* fiber include:

- wheat bran
- corn bran
- seeds
- nuts
- dark green, leafy vegetables

Do not be concerned about how much of each you need to eat. Both forms provide health advantages. Rich sources of fiber usually contain a mix of soluble and insoluble forms.

You should consume a minimum of 25 grams of fiber a day. This amount would be approximately five daily servings of fruits and vegetables and six servings of grain products (preferably whole grains.)

Exercise of the Week

Back Hyperextension on Exercise Ball, Arms Fully Extended

(Consult your chiropractor before engaging in this or any other exercise.)

Difficulty: High

Lie on ball face down with feet on floor, legs straight. Feet together or apart (feet apart is easier). Back is in a straight position. Hands positioned to side, palms forward and thumbs up.

The exercise: use low back muscles to bring body into a hyperextension position, shoulders back. Reach fingertips as far back toward feet as possible, keeping arms straight, palms out and thumbs up. Hold for 1-2 counts.

Repeat 5-10 repetitions.



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The Science of Fiber

The health benefits of fiber go far beyond than just keeping you regular.

Numerous studies show a diet rich in soluble fiber can be vital for the heart. In fact, the Food and Drug Administration allows manufacturers whose products contain at least 0.75 grams per serving of soluble fiber, from whole oats, to claim soluble fiber from this food source may lower the risk of heart disease.

A review of 67 controlled studies on dietary fiber showed increasing the intake of viscous fiber (e.g. legumes, barley and oats) by just 10 grams daily saw bad LDL cholesterol reductions on average of 22mg/dl (0.57 mmol/L) and a total cholesterol reduction of approximately 17 mg/dl (0.45 mmol/L).¹

But there is more good news. Research shows fiber can lower the chances of developing coronary artery disease. In a group of studies, scientific investigators found that every 10 gram increase in total dietary fiber was linked to a drop of 24% in deaths from coronary artery disease and a 14% reduction in cardiac events like heart attacks.²

As well, two studies revealed consuming more oat-based cereals helped lower blood pressure.³

Assists with Blood Sugar

The large consumption of low fiber, refined carbohydrates in North America and the booming obesity rate have contributed to a dramatic rise in type 2 diabetes.

Fiber may lend a hand in regulating blood sugar in diabetics. A meal that contains a good portion of viscous dietary fiber slows spikes in blood sugar levels. In a large review of dietary fiber studies, researchers found that high fiber diets lowered post-meal blood glucose by 13-21% compared to low fiber diets.⁴

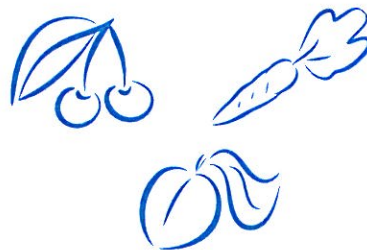
If you currently have diabetes, talk to your chiropractor about good dietary choices and be sure to incorporate plenty of legumes, nuts and non-starchy vegetables into your daily food selection.

Weight Loss with Fiber?

Can eating more fiber rich foods actually help you lose weight? Some research does support this theory. Studies demonstrate people who consume high amounts of fiber are much less likely to become obese compared to those people who consume low amounts of fiber.⁵

Fiber makes you feel fuller longer, so you are not as tempted to eat more. One study indicated women who boosted their fiber content by about 9 grams a day cut their risk of major weight gain in half.⁶

Have questions about fiber and your diet? Ask your chiropractor!



Quote to Inspire

“I would not waste my life in friction when it could be turned into momentum”

- Frances Willard

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