

Fabulous Fiber

Are You Getting Enough?

Fiber is the indigestible portion of the plant foods we eat. Even though your body can't break it down for fuel or nutrients, it is still essential to your health. Unfortunately, most people don't get enough fiber, which contributes to many of the health problems they experience.

The benefits of getting an adequate amount of fiber are numerous. For starters, fiber helps keep us regular because it absorbs water, lubricates the stool and helps food pass through the digestive tract quickly. This prevents toxic materials from irritating the colon and being absorbed into the body. Research has shown that having a diet high in fiber-rich foods helps protect against appendicitis, colon cancer, diverticulitis, irritable bowel syndrome and hemorrhoids.

However, fiber's benefits on the gastrointestinal tract are only the beginning. Fiber also reduces the risk of cancer in general (including breast cancer in women) because it binds with toxins (like xenoestrogens) so they aren't absorbed. Fiber also helps reduce cholesterol because it binds the cholesterol-rich bile salts produced by the liver. This also reduces the risk of gallstones and other gallbladder problems.

By slowing the release of sugars into the blood stream, fiber also helps in the management of hypoglycemia and diabetes. Fiber's effects on blood sugar, coupled with the fact that it creates a feeling of fullness that causes a person to eat less, also makes fiber helpful in weight management. With all these benefits, who wouldn't want to make sure they have enough fiber in their diet?

How Much Fiber Do You Need?

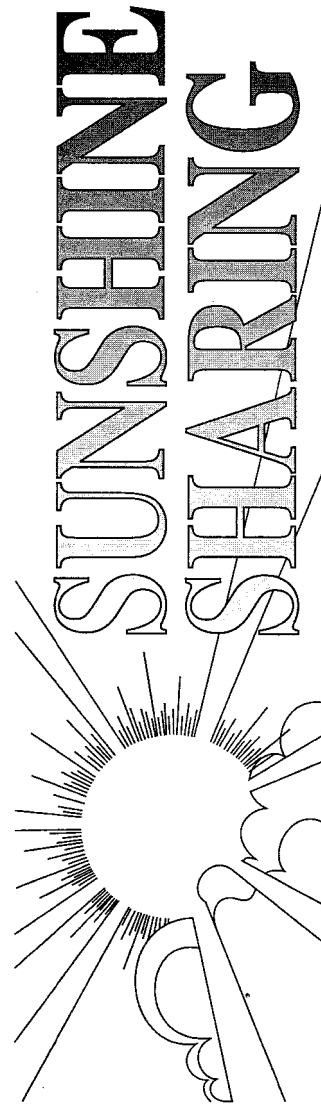
The Institute of Medicine recommends that men under 50 should get about 38 grams of fiber daily and at least 30 grams if they are over 50. The recommendation for women is slightly lower: 25 grams under 50 and 21 grams over 50. Children, of course, need less. Unfortunately, the average American (both adults and children) consume only about half the grams of fiber they need.

This probably wouldn't be the case if we didn't eat refined and processed foods. The fiber rich peelings and seeds are removed from fruits and vegetables. The bran is removed from fiber rich whole grains and sugars are extracted from fiber rich plants. In addition people eat a lot of meat and dairy products (which do not contain fiber) instead of fiber-rich fruits and vegetables.

Traditionally, people used to call fiber "roughage," but most fiber in foods is not "rough" in any sense of the word. Fiber actually absorbs water to form a soft mass, which lubricates and soothes the intestines. In fact, we might call most fiber "smoothage," because it makes things move more smoothly through the gastrointestinal tract.

In this issue of *Sunshine Sharing*, we'll talk about the benefits of getting enough fiber in your diet. We'll explain the difference between soluble and insoluble fiber and give you practical suggestions for increasing your intake of both. We'll also discuss some quality fiber supplements you can use.

So, turn the page and learn how fiber can protect your health...



Your guide to better health the natural way.

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Important Notice

The information in *Sunshine Sharing* is for educational purposes only and should not be used to diagnose and treat diseases. If you have a health problem, we recommend you consult a competent health practitioner before embarking on any course of treatment.

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The Many Benefits of Fiber

Fiber is important if you want to enjoy optimal health. Here is an explanation of the many benefits of getting an adequate amount of fiber in your diet.

Preventing Constipation

Constipation is a root cause of numerous other health problems. When food moves too slowly through the digestive system, intestinal membranes are irritated and toxins are absorbed into the blood stream, stressing the liver and increasing inflammation throughout the body.

Soluble fiber helps keep the stool soft and lubricated and promotes intestinal peristalsis. It also soothes the intestinal membranes and absorbs irritating substances so they don't enter the body. Fiber can only do this when it is taken with lots of water. If you increase your fiber intake without drinking adequate amounts of water it can't do its job of keeping the stool soft and keeping you regular.

Preventing Colon Cancer and Other Cancers

Soluble fiber appears to play a role in the prevention of bowel cancer. *The Journal of the American Dietetic Association* explains that studies examining the correlation between fiber intake and colon cancer, while not entirely consistent, offer sufficient evidence for health professionals to advise patients to consume adequate fiber as protection against cancer.

Soluble fiber works to prevent cancer by preventing waste material from staying in the colon for long periods of time, thereby preventing toxins from irritating colon tissues. This may have benefits in preventing other types of cancer, as well. Fiber has been shown to reduce the risk of breast and prostate cancer because it absorbs excess estrogens. Also, many fiber rich-foods contain lignans and isoflavones (phytoestrogens), which block overstimulation of breast, uterine and prostate tissue by stronger estrogens.

Promoting Colon Health

Fiber reduces the risk of forming diverticula (bowel pockets), hemorrhoids and anal fistula. It also reduces the risk of inflammatory bowel disorders. Soluble fiber also feeds the friendly bacteria (probiotics) in the colon. These bacteria protect the body from infections by pathological organisms and regulate the immune system to reduce the risk of allergies, asthma and auto-immune disorders. Other supplements that work well with fiber in keeping the colon healthy include enzymes (like **Proactazyme** or **Food Enzymes**) and probiotics (like **Probiotic Eleven**). Taking these supplements with fiber increases your protection against diseases of the gastrointestinal tract.



Types and Sources of Fiber

There are two basic types of fiber, soluble and insoluble. Let's look at the difference.

Soluble Fiber

Soluble fiber can't be broken down by our digestive system, but the friendly bacteria in our colon can ferment (or digest) this fiber. Soluble fiber is broken down into short chain fatty acids that can be absorbed and burned for fuel. The amount of calories they release is small, but since these calories can't be released until the food reaches the colon, this helps to stabilize blood sugar. Soluble fiber acts as a food for the friendly flora (probiotic bacteria) found in the digestive tract. These bacteria protect us against infection and have many other benefits for our health.

Soluble fibers include beta-glucans (which lower cholesterol and benefit the immune system), pectins, gums, mucilage and fructooligosaccharides like inulin (which are known as prebiotics because of their ability to feed the probiotic bacteria). Foods naturally rich in soluble fiber include:

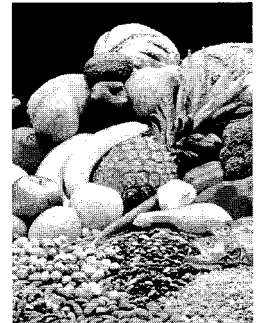
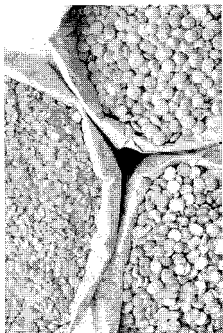
- Flax seed
- Nuts (especially almonds)
- Legumes such as beans and peas

- Grains like oats, barley and chia
- Fruits and natural fruit juices, such as prune juice, plums, berries, bananas, apples and pears
- Vegetables such as broccoli, carrots and Jerusalem artichokes
- Root vegetables and tubers such as sweet potatoes and onions

Insoluble fiber

Insoluble fiber consists of those parts of plant-based foods that your body doesn't break down at all. It passes through your digestive tract unchanged and serves primarily to bulk the stool, preventing constipation and auto-intoxication (the absorption of toxic substances from the colon). Foods rich in insoluble fiber include:

- Whole grains, bran
- Nuts and seeds
- Legumes such as beans and peas
- Fruits like avocado and slightly green bananas
- Vegetables such as green beans, cauliflower, zucchini, celery, and nopal
- The peelings of most fruits and vegetables, including potato skins



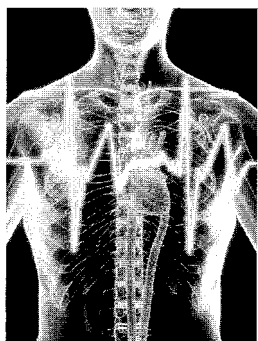
Metabolic Syndrome and Diabetes

Metabolic syndrome is a combination of altered blood sugar levels, excess weight, high blood pressure and high triglycerides. It is a precursor to diabetes, heart disease and other diseases associated with aging. It is caused by eating a lot of simple carbohydrates (such as refined sugars and white flour products).

Fiber-rich foods slow the absorption of sugars into the bloodstream, which helps to correct one of the underlying causes of metabolic syndrome. This is also helpful in the management of type 2 diabetes. A study published in the 2010 *Journal of Clinical Gastroenterology* explained that psyllium and other soluble fibers have a beneficial effect on blood sugar levels, fatty acids and satiety, thus supporting the use of soluble fiber as a treatment for metabolic syndrome and diabetes.

Reducing Triglycerides and Cholesterol

In addition to slowing and regulating sugar absorption, soluble fiber binds to fatty acids slowing their absorption into the blood stream. The supplement **Fat Grabbers** is specifically formulated for this purpose. Fiber also binds the cholesterol-rich bile from the liver and gallbladder. This keeps the cholesterol from being reabsorbed, which helps to lower both LDL and total cholesterol levels. It also inhibits the formation of gallstones and reduces the risk of gallbladder diseases.



Cardiovascular Health

If you are not already at risk for cardiovascular disease, eating insoluble fiber on a regular basis may reduce your risk of developing it. Even if you are at high risk for cardiovascular disease eating insoluble fiber may slow the progression of cardiovascular disease in your body, according to the American Heart Association. Some research suggests that insoluble fiber can help your heart by reducing inflammation in your arteries, reducing your blood pressure, and reducing your chances of developing blood clots. Research even suggests that a high fiber diet reduces your risk of getting varicose veins.

Weight Management

The simple fact that high fiber foods require you to chew longer can actually help you lose weight. Chewing longer gives your body a chance to detect fullness signals, which reduces your risk of overeating. Eating fibrous foods can also help you feel full longer, and foods with lots of insoluble fiber tend to have fewer calories. This may help you to reduce your weight.

As you can see, the benefits of fiber are numerous. The best way to get adequate fiber is to eat fiber-rich foods, which contain other beneficial nutrients besides fiber. Unfortunately, most people in our society are not going to get adequate fiber from their diets. This makes taking a daily fiber supplement a beneficial health practice for most people.

Fiber Supplements

The best fiber strategy for men and women is to eat a mix of soluble and insoluble fiber in the amount of 25 to 35 grams per day. Taking a fiber supplement each morning before breakfast is a great way to increase the amount of fiber in your diet.

Start slowly, with about 1/2 a teaspoon and gradually work up to two or three teaspoons. Mix the fiber with water or a non-citrus juice such as apple, grape or apricot. Drink quickly before the fiber has a chance to gel. Follow with a large glass of water. Be sure to drink plenty of water throughout the day when taking fiber. Exercising also improves colon tone and increases the effectiveness of fiber.

If you have very sluggish bowels when you start taking fiber, it may be wise to take an herbal laxative for a few weeks to speed up colon transit time. **LBS II** or **Cascara Sagrada** can be helpful. One can also perform a type of daily "cleanse" by taking fiber with a detoxification formula like **All Cell Detox** or **Enviro-Detox**. This helps protect the body against environmental toxins.

Here are some fiber blends to consider.

Psyllium Hulls Combination

Psyllium hulls are a popular source of insoluble fiber because they absorb several times their weight in water. Psyllium binds cholesterol and is soothing and mucilaginous to intestinal membranes. **Psyllium Hulls Combination** contains an extremely high grade of psyllium hulls flavored with hibiscus flowers and licorice root. This is the coarsest of the fiber supplements and is best for people with atonic colons. It should be avoided by people with irritable bowel or inflammatory bowel disorders.

Nature's Three

To supplement your diet with a blend of soluble and insoluble fiber in a convenient form, try **Nature's Three**. This product contains fiber from three different sources: psyllium, oat bran and apple fiber. Oat bran is rich in beta-glucans and has been shown to help lower cholesterol levels. Apple fiber is very good at relieving constipation. This is a gentler fiber combination and can be made even gentler by mixing it with equal parts freshly ground flax seed or chia seed. This formula is particularly useful for people who are new to taking fiber.

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Additional Help and Information

For more help in understanding the benefits of fiber and in selecting the right fiber supplement for you, contact the person who gave this newsletter to you. Their information should be found at the top of the following page. You can also consult the following sources:

Fiber Facts by Rita Elkins

What's With Fiber? by Gene and Monica Spiller

The Comprehensive Guide to Nature's Sunshine Products by Tree of Light.



Would You Be Interested in a Simple Nutrient that Can...

- ...reduce your risk of colon cancer, diverticulitis, hemorrhoids and other colon health problems?
- ...lower your cholesterol naturally, without drugs?
- ...lower your blood sugar levels and help prevent diabetes?
- ...decrease your appetite and help you lose weight?
- ...help keep your regular and prevent diarrhea, too?

**Fiber has been proven to do all these things.
Discover its many benefits inside.**

Continued from Page Three

LOCLO

LOCLO gets its name from the fact it was designed to lower cholesterol. It provides both soluble and insoluble fiber from six sources: psyllium, oat bran, apple fiber, acacia gum, guar gum and flax seed. The gums are mucilaginous fibers that have even more soothing effects on the colon. Flax seeds are very lubricating to a dry colon and also contain fatty acids that benefit the immune system and reduce inflammation in the bowel.

LOCLO also contains a blend of powdered fruits, vegetables and herbs, as well as bioflavonoids. These provide antioxidants that soothe intestinal inflammation, making this a more suitable fiber for people suffering from inflammatory bowel disorders than either Nature's Three or Psyllium Hulls Combination.

Everybody's Fiber

Everybody's Fiber is the most gentle fiber product of the four. It contains no psyllium or oat bran. Its primary source of fiber is slippery elm, a soothing and nourishing herb that is often used for people with Crohn's disease, gastroesophageal reflux disease, inflammatory bowel disease and ulcerative colitis. It may also be beneficial in the treatment of peptic ulcers and diarrhea (especially in children).

Everybody's Fiber also contains apple pectin, flax seed and marshmallow root, all of which contain soothing water soluble fibers. This blend also contains herbs that reduce intestinal inflammation, relieve gas and bloating and balance gut flora, making it the best fiber supplement for people with any type of inflammatory condition in the gastrointestinal tract. It combines well with **Intestinal Soothe and Build** for these conditions.