

Fiber and Disease

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So what is our nutritional question of the day? Today's question is, "Can fiber prevent diseases?" There are countless medical studies that evaluate such claims and go into detail on whether or not these statements are true. Science has made many advances in understanding fiber and how it affects the body. In my fiber research, I read through related articles on heart disease, inflammatory bowel disease, and diabetes. I will discuss my assessments and reviews with you.

My first assessment was on heart risks and fiber. I was surprised to learn that fiber could actually prevent coronary heart disease. How much fiber should one eat? The normal fiber intake is about 25 grams a day and most of get anywhere from 14-15 grams of fiber a day; obviously, the higher fiber intake is usually better for you. The article also covered 2 important types of fiber, soluble and insoluble. Soluble helps keep cholesterol from ending up in your body, which is good because we all know that high cholesterol can lead to heart attacks. Insoluble fiber aids in the progressive digestive process. So to reduce heart risks, eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and nuts (Tufts University, 2011).

The second disease that I examined was inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) and how fiber can contribute to a healthier colon. I was interested in learning more about this as I have a friend who has been diagnosed with irritable bowel syndrome and I really never understood what he was experiencing. The studies I read say that the reason that fiber has a positive effect on IBD is because of the reduced inflammatory response. Fiber produces something called butyrate in the colon; this aids in creating healthy fibers, which is good because healthy fibers mean improved processing and improved processing leads to a healthier person (Rose, 2007).

The third disease that I researched was diabetes and how fiber could possibly help a diabetic. I learned that in some cases, consuming high amounts of fiber could actually prevent

diabetes all together. The article goes on to say the reason why fiber has health benefits is because it slows down the absorption rate of carbohydrates; thus reducing the amount of blood glucose entering the bloodstream. So where do you get diabetes reducing fiber from? The best place is fiber-rich, grain fiber cereals. Some of worst sources of fiber are from white bread, potatoes, and white rice. This is because they rapidly absorb into your body and the blood glucose level climbs very quickly. Diabetes can be controlled if not all together prevented with a healthy fiber diet, general exercise, and educating yourself on fiber (Harvard, 1997).

In Conclusion, I reviewed three diseases that fiber can have a significant impact on. Heart risk can be reduced by eating a healthy fiber diet. Irritable bowel disease can be controlled with fiber by building a healthier colon. And, diabetes could actually be prevented by adding fiber to your diet.

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