

Student Contribution: Go for Fiber



Nowadays, our supermarket shelves are filled with processed foods. Unknown to many, we are dying slow deaths as a result of a host of degenerative diseases related to the kind of food we consume.

Just not too long ago, we thought that we were doing ourselves a big favor by getting rid of the skin, husks and tough, spiny parts of our food. Ironically, it turns out that maintaining a multiple source, high fiber, low fat diet may be the best form of life insurance we can provide for ourselves!

Two major types of fiber exist in the typical diet -- soluble and insoluble. Soluble fibers break down within the digestive tract while insoluble fibers pass through unchanged. Within each of these two main fiber types are many different subtypes, all from different plant sources.

During the time that the waste products are lingering in the colon, dreadful toxins are produced. How do we get rid of these toxins? The answer lies in a high fiber diet. A high fiber diet expels potentially toxic and carcinogenic (cancer-causing) materials quickly from the body as it dramatically decreases the length of time waste products spend in the colon.

Soluble fibers work like a sponge, absorbing toxins and carrying them away while producing beneficial chemical changes within the bloodstream. On the other hand, insoluble fibers work like a scrub brush to clean the inside of the colon.

Citizens of non-industrialised nations are known to consume diets high in dietary fiber compared to people in industrialised countries, putting them at a much lower risk. People on a low fiber diet are prone to higher incidences of coronary artery disease, colon cancer, obesity, diabetes and various gastro-intestinal disorders, hemorrhoids and gallstones.

Studies, over the years, have supported the link between fiber and these diseases. It is therefore worth the while to consider following a diet rich in fiber by including such foods as whole grain and cereal products, vegetables, fruits, and beans.

Having said that, we also need to bear in mind that increasing fiber intake without increasing water intake will do more harm than good. So as you increase your fiber intake, be sure to drink more water!

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