

# TogetheriCan

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF FIBER IN THE DIET

### Fiber – Nature's Natural Cleanser

**Dietary fiber** and its physical makeup *affect the functioning of the entire gastrointestinal system*. It has a tremendous impact on the rate that nutrients are absorbed, as well as enhancing the peristalsis of the gut and the through-put of the food passing through the gut.

*It's known to assist in lowering cholesterol levels. It also assists in balancing the glycemic response, plus improving the large intestine (colon) function. Both bulking the stool from soluble fiber and cleansing the intestinal tract from insoluble fiber take place.*

As it does what no other nutrient can do to enhance overall health, it should be considered a **requirement for everyone's diet**. Some research indicates that it can actually reduce the risk of heart disease.

The **American Dietetic Association** recommends that we consume **at least 20 grams and up to 35 grams of fiber daily**.

Other research shows that the incidence of heart disease and cancer are almost zero in countries consuming 60 plus grams of fiber daily.

In the diets I've analyzed, I personally never found more than 15 grams of fiber being consumed daily. This includes my own diet, in which I thought I was really trying.

Fiber falls under the classification of a carbohydrate—only because it is not a fat or protein. This part of our diet is more than the sum of its parts. **Fiber is the part of the food which is not digested**. It contributes nothing nutritionally (0 calories) in the way of calories and, therefore, energy. **Fiber** is the only component of our food that **contains no calories**.

Fiber is a subclass portion of carbohydrates that is **made up of non-starch or unavailable polysaccharides**. Fiber is **made up of cellulose, hemicellulose, lignin, and pectins**, which do not break down into glucose when digested.

*Fiber should not be considered an inert filler*, nor should it be placed in the same class as leafy plants, which provide bulk but almost no fiber.

There are two types of fiber that need to be considered. **Soluble and Insoluble**. The **soluble fibers** (brans, pectins, and various gums that can be found in nuts and seeds) are **important for bulking the stool** and binding with bile acids so that cholesterol can be excreted instead of being reabsorbed.

Soluble fiber encourages health by absorbing liquids, which in turn increases fecal bulk. This action **enhances peristalsis**, the undulating motion of the intestines, which moves the fecal matter through the intestines, decreasing transit time.

The **insoluble fiber acts as a scrub brush**, which pull toxins and unwanted buildups of mucoid plaque from the colon.

**Fiber deficiencies** are now being associated with **appendicitis, breast, colon, and prostate cancer, colitis, diverticular disease, gastrointestinal disorders, gallstones, hemorrhoids hiatus hernia and ulcers.**

Most fiber will increase stool volume (fecal bulk). Here is a **“test” or observation** that allows you to be a scientist. **Take an inventory** as to whether your stool sinks or floats. If you're a sinker, you may be headed for trouble.

As long as you are playing scientist, you may want to **check your transit time**—the length of time it takes for a bite of food to travel through your gastrointestinal system.

A very easy way to check is to **eat some corn or beets for dinner** some evening. Record the time you eat it. **Then watch for it to be excreted.**

A transit time for a healthy person is between 12 and 20 hours.

*Why all of the fuss about transit time? Imagine leaving a plate of food on a window sill on a hot day (98 degrees). Now imagine what happens to that food. It rots, putrefies, or ferments and in some way will go bad. Can you now imagine what happens to food that is left in the gut for an extended period? It will have the tendency to do the same. Instead of absorbing nutrients, the body will start absorbing poisons, including a production of carcinogenic substances.*

Make sure that when you are shopping for a **fiber supplement**, you **choose one that has both soluble and insoluble fiber included.** When you consume fiber, do so throughout the day, not all at once.

*Michael McCright*

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