

Fill Up with Fiber

Worried about your weight? Concerned about cholesterol? Care about cancer?

The answer to all of the above may be Fill up with Fiber. Most Americans fall far short of the recommended 25 to 38 grams of fiber a day in our diets. Our average is only about 15 grams!

But the evidence keeps piling up that diets high in fiber are more satisfying. A high-fiber meal fills you up, and you keep feeling full for longer afterward. That means you are likely to eat less. One study found that adding an extra 14 g of fiber to a normal diet led to over 4 pounds of weight loss in four months. And obese people lost more than normal weight people.

Some kinds of fiber, specifically oat and barley fibers, are known to help increase the amount of cholesterol eliminated in the feces. This lowers the level of cholesterol in our blood stream.

Diets high in fiber are also tied to lower risk of some cancers, especially colon cancer. It seems that the bacteria that can digest fiber in our intestines produce some amino acids that protect the lining of the intestine.

So where do you find this good stuff? If you don't eat much fiber now, start slowly, but aim for 25 g a day. . While a slice of whole wheat bread only has about 2 g, one cup of bran cereal will give you an extra 14 g. If you prefer other forms, a cup of cooked broccoli has 5.5 g, plus a cup of cooked collard greens with 5.3 g and a cup of sliced cooked carrots with 5.1 g gives you 15.8 g total. And of course there are the beans. One cup of homemade baked beans also provides 14 g of fiber. Black beans

and lentils also have 15 g, canned kidney beans have 16 g. There are lots of ways to get your fiber. Whichever way you prefer, start filling up on fiber today.