

THE ROAD TO HEALTH & WELLNESS



News and advice courtesy of
ELITE
PERSONAL TRAINING AND FITNESS SOLUTIONS

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Introduction

January is National Fiber Month. Less than five percent of Americans get the recommended amount of fiber each day. Just checking if you heard that! Less than 1 out of 20 of Americans get the recommended amount of fiber each day. Odds are pretty good that you are one of the 19/20 who are not.



David Trumbore
PT, DPT, CSCI, CWT, CPI, CFNP



SCAN ME



If you're experiencing digestive issues, hormonal imbalances, sugar cravings, weight gain or a host of other problems, it could be due in large part to inadequate fiber intake. If you think it's expensive to invest in your health – wait until you're sick! Over 22 million Americans visit their physicians each year with digestive complaints. The leading cause of bankruptcy in the United States is due to medical bills! Wouldn't it be great to cut down on those bills?



If a healthy diet were a high-fashion wardrobe, dietary fiber would be the sensible shoes. And, like sensible shoes, fiber isn't glamorous. However, it can take you where you need to go.

Because of its importance to good health, let's start 2024 off with a review of fiber.

Elite Personal Training and Fitness Solutions does not provide medical treatment or intervention. We acknowledge scientific evidence that appropriately intensive exercise and sustainable nutritional intervention can have significant impact on chronic health disorders and obesity, dramatically improving symptoms when recommendations are followed. Please visit us at Eliteptf.com for more information and to schedule your evaluation.

What is fiber?

Fiber refers to nondigestible carbohydrates - those that aren't broken down and absorbed in your digestive tract for energy. Fiber comes in two forms - soluble and insoluble. Soluble fiber forms a gel-like substance in your intestines. This slows down digestion. It also traps cholesterol and prevents your body from reabsorbing it into your bloodstream. The trapped cholesterol is then excreted from your body in stool. Insoluble fiber adds bulk to the stool and speeds up digestion.

Most foods have both insoluble and soluble fiber but are usually richer in one type. To get full benefit, you should consume both soluble and insoluble fiber.

Recommendations

The recommended amount of fiber is 25 grams per day for women and 36 grams per day for men. However, these recommendations are not precise. Individual needs vary considerably. At EPT, we recommend that our clients consume a minimum of 30 g per day. This makes it easier to memorize since we recommend keeping your sugar intake under 30 grams.

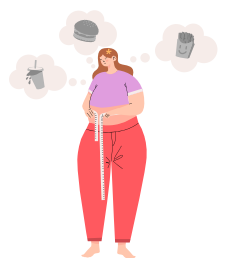
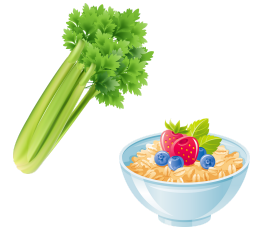
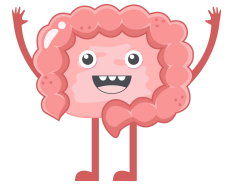
To get enough fiber, it's important to consume enough plants. Dairy, meat, chicken, and fish are part of a healthy diet, but they have zero fiber.

What's so great about fiber?

Fiber helps control blood sugar.

Fiber allows for a slow release of blood sugar into the bloodstream. Picture fiber as holding onto the carbohydrates in your meal and slowly releasing just a little bit at a time over a period of 2-3 hours. This results in a steady stream of blood sugar that can be used by your cells for sustained energy.

Because processed carbohydrates have been stripped of fiber, they enter the bloodstream rapidly. All that sugar dumped into the bloodstream at once can't be entirely used for energy. It creates an insulin surge followed by an insulin crash. This triggers a desire for more sugar or carbohydrates. Over time, this can lead to weight gain, blood sugar problems, mood swings and unhealthy eating patterns.



Soluble fiber helps lower total and LDL cholesterol levels.

Foods high in soluble fiber may support healthy cholesterol levels. These foods include oats, beans, peas, lentils, apples, avocados, and flaxseed. Oats reign supreme. Oats are high in a soluble fiber called beta-glucan. Eating about 1 cup of oats per day may help lower LDL cholesterol by about 11%.

While fiber supplements may help you reach the recommended 25-35 grams of fiber per day, they cannot take the place of eating a balanced diet that includes fiber-rich foods. If you must take an OTC soluble fiber to help lower cholesterol, psyllium supplements have the most research support. More than 24 clinical trials have investigated the impact of psyllium on cholesterol, with daily amounts ranging from 6-15 grams.



Fiber is the foundation for a healthy gut.

There are trillions of bacteria in our gut that help it function at its best. The gut can dictate the fate of the immune system, inflammation, and neurotransmitters, which is why you often hear that a healthy gut leads to a healthy mind. What fuels these healthy bacteria? Fiber and lots of it!

Without fiber you simply cannot have a healthy gut. When we don't have enough fiber (food) for the bacteria, they start chowing down on our protective gut lining.

Fiber helps produce short chain fatty acids in the colon through feeding healthy bacteria in our gut. Short chain fatty acids help regulate metabolism, enhance mineral absorption, improve the gut mucosal barrier and decrease pathogens that enter the bloodstream.



Fiber helps to balance hormones (including estrogen and hunger hormones).

If you're experiencing symptoms of excess estrogen or often feel hungry right after you eat, chances are you lack enough fiber. Excess estrogen in the body is removed by fiber and fiber also triggers hormones that signal you're full.



Fiber helps you fill up quickly.

Fiber also keeps you full longer. This helps you naturally stop eating when you're full. Thus, it helps minimize overeating. If you're trying to manage weight, fiber is key.



Fiber may reduce the risk of lifestyle diseases like heart disease, cancer, diabetes and possibly Alzheimer's disease.

High-fiber diets may also reduce brain inflammation, which in turn could mean less cognitive decline and memory loss with age, and decreased risk of neurodegenerative diseases.



Easy ways to boost fiber

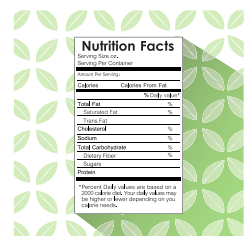
- Eat 1/2-1 avocado a day (There's almost 10 grams of fiber per avocado!).
- Add 1-2 Tbsp chia seeds to oatmeal, smoothies or salad bowls.
- Include three plant-based colors with each meal (for example add blueberries, bananas and chia seeds to oatmeal; tomato, leafy greens and red onion to a sandwich; radish, kimchi and sprouts to avocado toast).
- Snack on a handful of nuts, seeds or toasted chickpeas rather than chips.
- Swap whole grains for processed white carbohydrate foods (whole grain bread, whole grain pasta or brown rice for white bread, pasta or rice).
- Swap eggs in baked goods with a chia or flax "egg." (One tablespoon of chia or flax meal + 3 tablespoons of water = 1 egg.)
- Swap a bean burger in place of a traditional hamburger one day a week.



Attention label readers

If you're searching for the amount of fiber on a nutrition facts label, first locate carbohydrates on the label. You will find the amount of carbohydrates located near the bottom of the label. Fiber will be listed directly underneath carbohydrates because fiber is considered a form of carbohydrate.

When comparing items like bread, cereal or breakfast bars with their nutrition facts labels, select items with at least 2-3 grams of fiber per serving. You can also compare the amount of fiber to the percent daily value on the food label. If the percent daily value of that food item is 20 percent or greater, then that food item is a good source of fiber.



Conclusion

Want help losing weight? Eat more fiber. Looking to lower your cholesterol? Eat more fiber. Need to reduce your risk of certain cancers? Eat more fiber. Want to prevent diabetes? Eat more fiber. Have problems with overeating? Eat more fiber.

Bottom line? Eat more fiber!

Start 2024 off right with a goal to increase your consumption of fiber-rich foods such as beans, peas, lentils, fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds. Need more suggestions or some tasty recipes? Reach out to your trainers. Each one is certified in functional nutrition.



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Research Shows

Too much sitting is not good for the brain. But how much sedentary time is too much? According to a study published online Sept. 12, 2023, by *JAMA*, remaining physically inactive for 10 or more hours per day is linked to a higher risk of later developing dementia.

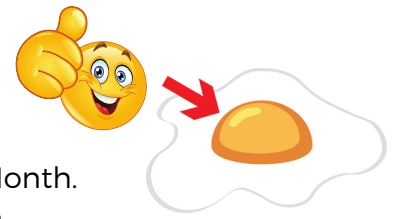
For the study, 50,000 people (average age 67, about 45% of whom were men) who were free of dementia wore a wrist accelerometer 24 hours a day for one week to track their daily moving time. After an average of six years of follow up, the researchers checked to see which participants had been diagnosed with dementia and correlated that information with the activity readings from the start of the study. They found that people who had been inactive for at least 10 hours per day had a higher risk of dementia than those who spent more time moving.

The risk drastically increased the longer people were sedentary. For instance, compared with 10 hours of sitting, dementia risk rose 50% at 12 hours and almost tripled at 15 hours. The risk was also consistent whether the sedentary time occurred in extended continuous periods or was spread intermittently throughout the day.



The researchers pointed out that because there was no strong association with dementia risk among people who sat for less than 10 hours per day, this could be a good time marker to follow to ensure that you don't sit too much. **Sitting disease is serious. Even sitting for 30 minutes is bad for your joints.**

Did You Know...



Besides January being National Fiber Month, it is also National Egg Month. Egg whites are out; yolks are back in. Hooray. Decades ago, American public health officials believed that consuming the cholesterol found in egg yolks could raise your blood levels of cholesterol, which increases the risk of heart attacks and stroke.

Now, clinical studies show that the dietary cholesterol found in eggs has only a modest effect on blood cholesterol. It's so low, in fact, that the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines removed the 300 mg dietary cholesterol limit. All available evidence suggests there is no relationship between dietary cholesterol consumptions and levels of blood cholesterol.

Food For Thought: Focus on Right Now

Introduction

**Want to stay on track for your long-term health goals?
The key is to focus on the here and now!**



January is coming to an end. Like many of our readers, you've set goals for a healthier lifestyle for 2024. This year is going to be different. The fridge is stocked with fruits and veggies, you've tossed out processed foods, and your workout routine is written in pen in your daily planner.



Yet, as you head out one morning, the tantalizing aroma of fresh doughnuts wafts through the air. How can you resist the call and stick with your healthy choices?

Conventional wisdom suggests that the best way to resist unhealthy choices is to imagine the long-term consequences. For example, you could consider how the added sugar from eating too many doughnuts can lead to diabetes and obesity.



In reality, and often in the heat of the moment, people tend to overlook those distant outcomes. This diminishes the effectiveness of strategies that focus on the long term.

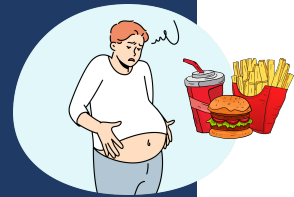


Food For Thought: Focus on Right Now

How to Make Healthy Habits Stick:

Think short-term

One strategy to avoid indulging is to consider the short-term consequences of unhealthy behavior. For alcohol, think about how excessive drinking can lead to poor sleep and hangovers. For fast food, think about how it can make you feel bloated or give you indigestion. In research studies, immediate effects were a stronger motivator than long-term consequences. Adding achievable, measurable short term goals will provide stepping stones to longer term goals. For example: setting a goal to exercise twice per week at a regular time will help build habits to exercise into your schedule. With commitment and consistency this will contribute to longer term goals like weight management or increasing strength and mobility.



Focus on the fun

Avoiding unhealthy foods is one thing. On the flip side, how can you nudge yourself toward consuming more healthy foods? Behavioral scientists have found that prompting people to focus on good taste rather than the health benefits of foods such as apples and carrots increased consumption in the lab and the real world. These findings were independently replicated in an intervention at five university dining halls that used food labels focused on either tastiness or healthfulness. Incorporate healthy foods you like, cook and season them and enjoy!



This strategy can also promote other healthy behaviors, such as exercise. In one study, gymgoers were asked to choose a weightlifting workout from a list of similarly difficult routines. The participants who were instructed to select a fun exercise complete more reps than those told to pick an exercise most useful for their long-term fitness goals. Our trainers individualize prescriptive exercise to include what you need and enjoy.



Focusing on the immediate versus delayed benefits of behaviors such as healthy eating and exercise can increase intrinsic motivation (internal drive or motivation from within). Making a behavior feel like its own reward results in "flow," (feeling more deeply involved in the activity).



Use rewards

Starting healthy behaviors is but one piece of the puzzle. Another is sticking with the behaviors over time. One strategy for persistence is to use rewards to stay committed.

Food For Thought: Focus on Right Now

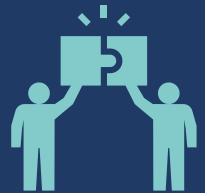
Research involving over 5,000 people across eight experiments found that small, regular rewards were more effective for cultivating long-term commitment to healthy behavior such as exercising and flossing than large, occasional rewards. Think watching 20 minutes of a guilty pleasure TV show each day you work out, rather than waiting until the end of the week to watch 80 minutes of TV to reward yourself for those four workouts.



But there's a twist...

Rewarding yourself too early may backfire. It seems rewards are most effective when people must work to unlock them, after which they become regular. In other words, putting in initial effort while not being rewarded, followed by small, continual perks, is the most effective way to structure rewards.

Keeping the rewards under control is also key. Allowing yourself to enjoy a few "cheat" foods or meals during the week is sustainable. Following a ridiculous and restrictive diet all week and binge eating all weekend is not. Having a health partner like EPT will be critical for understanding rewards and positive behavior change.



Takeaway

What's great about these strategies is that you can adapt them to any personal goal you hold. For instance, if you're finding it hard to swap social media for a book, consider reflecting on the negative short-term consequences of endless scrolling. Or if carving out time for relaxation feels like a challenge, focus on the immediate benefits of engaging in meditation.



Behavior change requires a committed mindset and is a gradual process over time. Motivation is often the focus, however it will not be enough to make changes long term. Many people make radical and extreme choices for health which do not fit our main principles: Safe, Sound, Scientific and Sustainable. If you finally want success making healthy changes, partner with EPT! With our expertise in fitness, nutrition and behavior change, we can help you with the hard part and achieve your long term health goals. We give you the 4S's and you give us the 4C's. Stay tuned to learn more about it!



Food for Thought and Recipe contributed by Lynette Jernigan, Clinical Director of Nutrition Services and Director of Business Development at EPT.

Reference

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EPT CLIENT HIGHLIGHT RECIPE

FROZEN BANANA: BET YA CAN'T EAT JUST ONE!



INGREDIENTS

- 1 very ripe banana, smashed
- 2T peanut butter powder
- 3T water
- 1/2t vanilla extract
- 1 cup chocolate chips



DIRECTIONS

1. Mix **peanut butter powder** with **water**. Stir until smooth.
2. Add **smashed banana** and stir to combine.
3. Melt **chocolate chips** until smooth. Microwave 15 seconds at a time.
4. Stir melted chocolate into peanut butter / banana mixture.
5. Add **vanilla extract** to the mix and stir to combine.
6. Portion into mini muffin tins and freeze until firm (approximately 2 hours).

Contributed by Suzanne G.

EPT PRO TIPS & FUN FACTS

- Peanut butter powders are widely available and contribute more protein content and less saturated fat than peanut butter. Substitute 1/4 cup regular peanut butter if you do not have this ingredient.
- Pure vanilla extract (or PVE) has FDA legal standard of identity, or restriction on ingredients. Avoid anything with “imitation” on the label. The real stuff may be expensive, but the wrong stuff has dangerous artificial ingredients. Vanilla enhances the sweetness without sugar.
- Try dark chocolate chips or chocolate. See our 12/26/22 health topic for brands and benefits of dark chocolate. Scan the code for this health topic.

