

Impact of dietary fibre when used in excess

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ALTHOUGH a recommended dietary allowance, or RDA, has not been set for fibre because of insufficient evidence, the Food and Nutrition Board has set an Adequate Intake for the nutrient. The Adequate Intake of fibre is the amount that should satisfy the needs of most healthy individuals within a specified age range. While fibre has a number of health benefits for the body, eating too much can lead to uncomfortable side-effects and potentially serious complications.

Understanding fibre

Fibre is a sort of starch found normally in plant-based nourishments that is not edible in people.

Plant-based nourishments that are rich in fibre for example, organic products, vegetables, entire grains, beans and vegetables, nuts and seeds — additionally contain nutrients, minerals, and other ground-breaking supplements that the body can use for ideal wellbeing.

In spite of the fact that fibre cannot be processed, it is being moved down the stomach related tract as supplements are being processed, and can do some extraordinary things that emphatically enhance our wellbeing.

A less complex proposal level for most grown-ups is somewhere in the range of 25 and 38 g for daily intake. Actually, fibre is recorded as a "supplement of worry" because of the low consumption generally and realised medical advantages.

What is the optimal amount of fibre to have per day?

The recommended minimum daily fibre intake depends on gender and age.

- Adult fibre intake
- Adults (50 years or younger) Adults (over 50)
- Men - 38 g, 30 g
- Women - 25 g, 21 g
- Child and adolescent fibre intake
- Daily fibre intake
- Children (1 to 3 years) - 19 g
- Children (4 to 8 years) - 25 g
- Children (9 to 13 years) - 26 g (female), 31 g (male)
- Adolescents (14 to 18 years) -

26 g (female), 38 g (male)
Taking in more fibre than recommended daily intake can cause unwanted symptoms like those listed.

How does fibre affect digestion?

There are two main types of fibre. Each type of fibre plays a different role in digestion:

Insoluble fibre adds bulk to one's stool and helps food pass more quickly through the stomach and intestines. It also helps balance the pH in one's intestine, and may prevent diverticulitis, an inflammation of the intestine, as well as colon cancer.

Soluble fibre attracts water and forms a gel-like substance with food as it's digested. This, in turn, slows down digestion and helps one feel full faster, which is important in weight management. It may also help lower risk of heart disease, regulate blood sugar, and help reduce LDL cholesterol.

Fermentable fibres can be from both these categories, though more often soluble fibres are fermented. Fibres fermented by bacteria help increase the bacteria in the colon, which aids digestion. It also plays a major role in human health.

What are the symptoms of too much fibre?

The recommended daily intake of fibre is 25 gram per day for women and 38 gram per day for men. However, some experts estimate as much as 95 per cent of the population does not ingest this much fibre.

While it appears most people fall short of their recommended fibre intake, it's actually possible to have too much fibre, especially if one increases fibre intake very quickly. Too much fibre can cause: Bloating; Abdominal pain; Flatulence; Loose stools or diarrhoea; Constipation; Temporary weight gain; Intestinal blockage in people with Crohn's disease; Reduced blood sugar levels, which is important to know if one has diabetes.

Fiber intake is a delicate balance. Though it may be better to have too much than too little, one will need to be cautious.

(The writer is a leading consultant)

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