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Preventing Holiday Pounds

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don't produce expected
beneficial effects.*

Preventing Holiday Pounds

BY WINSTON J. CRAIG

*Fiber-rich foods
assist with weight
management.*

As we approach the wonderful holiday season, many will want to avoid adding two to five extra pounds from consuming all the holiday goodies. Wise food selection is essential along with continued engagement in regular physical activities.

Years ago, the English physician, Denis Burkitt, proposed that fiber-rich foods helped reduce the risk of overweight along with protection against heart disease and diabetes. Fiber-rich foods help to satisfy your hunger, so it is easier to eat fewer calories and better manage your weight. Two major studies of American men and women suggested that people who eat high-fiber diets tend to have lower body weights than those who eat low-fiber diets. Reviews suggest that for every additional daily 10 grams of fiber consumed there is a seven percent drop in caloric intake.

Fiber-rich foods do take longer to chew (for example, carrot sticks versus cake). When we slow down the rate at which we eat, we give our bodies a better chance to let us know when we're full. Fiber also expands as it absorbs a lot of fluid. When fiber swells in our stomach, it helps us to feel more satisfied. Compared to the same amount of fiber-free or lower fiber foods, higher-fiber foods are more satiating and tend to have fewer calories. An apple has 45 grams of fiber and 75 calories while a piece of apple pie and ice-cream has 1 to 2 grams fiber and about 600 calories.

Many companies claim high fiber content for their processed foods due to the added processed fibers. Kellogg's Fiber Plus cereal products and their nutrition bars contain 9 to 10 grams of fiber per serving, but this fiber comes from chicory root fiber, soluble corn fiber, guar gum, cellulose, etc. In addition, General Mills Fiber One cereals and nutrition bars also

get much of their fiber from processed chicory root fiber or inulin. These added processed fibers have little effect upon satiety or the ability to maintain a healthy weight and do not have the same beneficial effect upon health as that seen with fiber-rich foods.

When polydextrose and other fibers were added to muffins, they had little or no effect upon satiety. When four different fibers were incorporated into chocolate bars, no differences in satiety, hunger or food intake at the next meal were observed compared with the chocolate bars with no added fiber.

When a Naked Blue Machine Boosted 100% Juice Smoothie made from fruit juices with added Fibersol-2, a processed fiber product, was consumed for breakfast, it did not satisfy people's appetite anywhere near as much as when the people ate oatmeal, blueberries and nuts. People felt fuller when eating the whole foods even though both meals had the same calories and same amount of fiber.

Clearly, the added fibers in processed foods do not typically affect satiety and overall food intake. The claims made for such high-fiber foods with the added fiber may be misleading. For improved satiety and calorie control, it is better to consume high-fiber whole foods such as fruits, vegetables, beans and whole grains.

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