Dietary Fiber Keeps a Healthy Bowel

Dietary fiber provides many benefits for human health. In addition to lower body weight due to its lower energy, improve lipid profile, lower blood sugar by slowing starch digestion and absorption, and reduce risks of breast and prostate cancer, a high fiber diet keeps a healthy bowel.

Dietary fiber can add bulk to the stool, as well as softening it via absorbing water. A larger stool is easier for bowels to move. This benefits the flow of food through the bowel. In the bowel, soluble fiber is broken down into a gel-like substance; insoluble fiber cannot be digested by human body, but the bowel bacteria break it down. A high-fiber diet helps the bacteria growth. These intestinal bacteria work to aid digestion, prevent gas and bloating and discourage growth of harmful bacteria.

People who develop colon cancer, irritable bowel syndrome, and diverticulosis have had a long history of difficulty with their bowels. Irritable bowel syndrome is a disturbance in the bowel characterized by discomfort, bloating, constipation, diarrhea, and even vomiting. Diverticulosis is a condition in which the walls of bowels bulge. In most instances, people with these diseases suffer from chronic constipation. The usual cause of chronic constipation is a lack of adequate dietary fiber. Eating adequate amounts of dietary fiber can help to regulate the flow of food through digestive system to relief irritable bowel symptoms, stimulate the muscle activity of the bowels, and help to achieve normal bowel movements and normal bowel habits. Dietary insoluble fiber is effective at inhibiting colon tumor development. This may be due to the interaction between fiber and colon bacteria.

Fermentable fibers as well as mixed fibers have been found local and systemic anti-inflammatory activities. Anti-inflammatory activities refer to the properties of activities and treatments that reduce inflammation which is associated with development of colon cancer, irritable bowel syndrome, and diverticulosis. Fermentable fibers are known to affect the bowel bacteria. The role of the bowel bacteria and bacteria activities could contribute to the systemic and local anti-inflammatory activities of fibers.

Dietary fiber is generally from plant foods, and consists of parts of plant which cannot be digested by human. To keep the bowels healthy, a lifelong daily intake of 20-35 grams of dietary fiber daily is required.

Resources:

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