

WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for January 17, 2022
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll talk about an unsung nutritional hero - fiber, and as always look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

Talk and advice about nutritional components seem to be in the news all the time. Low carb this, high protein that. But one thing that does not get near the attention that it should is fiber.

When you learn about all the benefits of getting enough fiber, it makes you wonder why we don't talk more about it. According to the National Institutes of Health, dietary fiber is found in the plants you eat, including fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. It is sometimes called bulk or roughage.

Some people probably don't talk much about fiber because we associate it primarily with normalizing bowel movements and relief of constipation. However, there are many other health benefits from fiber as well. Some studies suggest that high-fiber diets might also help with weight loss and reduce the risk for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer.

There are two forms of fiber- soluble and insoluble. Both are good for us for different reasons. Soluble fiber dissolves in water and forms a gel-like substance that binds to fats. This helps lower blood cholesterol levels, especially LDL, or bad, cholesterol. Soluble fiber also slows the absorption of glucose, which can help people with diabetes. Insoluble fiber is also helpful as it bulks up stool, helping it to move more efficiently through the body.

In general, whole fruits, legumes, and vegetables are good sources of both types of fiber. Take an apple for instance; the skin is made up of insoluble fiber and the fleshy part contains soluble fiber. The latest USDA Dietary Guidelines recommend that women try to eat at least 21 to 25 grams of fiber a day, while men should aim for 30 to 38 grams a day. Our American average is only about 10 to 15 g per day. In practical terms you could consume 27 g of fiber in a day by eating: ½ cup chopped vegetables, 1 medium size whole fruit with skin, 2 slices 100 percent whole wheat bread, ½ cup black beans, and ¾ cup oatmeal.

Dan Remley, our OSU Extension field specialist for Food, Nutrition, and Wellness, developed a great resource titled “Fiber Fills You Up, Fills your Wallet, and Fuels Your Health.” In it Remley says, “High fiber meals have fewer calories, are affordable, and can help your family feel full after a meal.”

He has a few fiber tips to help you gradually add more fiber to your day:

- Eat oatmeal several times a week. If you bake, add oatmeal to cookies.
- For breakfast choose a high-fiber breakfast cereal with 5 or more grams of fiber per serving. Choose cereals with “whole grain,” “bran” or “fiber” in the name. Or add a few tablespoons of unprocessed wheat bran to your favorite cereal.
- Serve a meatless dinner once a week. Substitute beans for meat.
- Eat 2 vegetable servings per meal. Leave the skin on fruits and vegetables.
- Snack on nuts, dried fruit, and popcorn. Choose chips or crackers with at least 2 grams of fiber per serving.

On another note, there are some processed food products out there with added fiber sources. In some cases, this can be a helpful way to add more fiber to your diet. Just be aware that these products may be high in calories and add more sugar or sodium than you realize. Your best bet is to eat as many whole fruits and whole grains as you can, rather than these formulated products.

And now let’s take a look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension. I will be teaching a ServSafe® Person-in-Charge food safety certification training on Thursday, February 3 from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Coshocton County Services Building. The program includes several hands-on activities and an Ohio Department of Health Person-in-Charge Certificate. Pre-registration is required by January 28. You can find details about future programs related to financial wellness, food preservation, diabetes, and more at our website coshocton.osu.edu.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help educate and improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Make it a healthy day!