

Fiber consumption shows promise in fight against obesity

Dieters bombarded with messages about low-carbohydrate, high-protein and low-fat ways to lose weight may have another tool in their arsenal against the battle of the bulge.

Recent research has shown that high-fiber diets support greater weight loss and overall good health. Several studies have pointed to the connection, including a Tufts University study published in the September 2005 *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. In the study, researchers focused on the



potential relationship between amounts of fibrous foods consumed and body mass index (BMI), defined as a measurement that correlates with body fat. BMI is a mathematical formula that expresses a height-to-weight ratio. Measured in kilograms, a person's body weight is divided by the square of his height in meters. Desirable BMI levels vary with age and circumstance.

Apples are a great source of fiber. The Tufts study looked at 2,900 healthy adults and found that dietary fiber intake was associated with lower body weight and lower BMI, along with reduced levels for blood pressure, triglyceride and cholesterol in those tested. The research showed that those who consumed more fiber had healthier levels of all the factors analyzed. The Tufts study concluded that weight control advice for Americans, especially U.S. women, should place greater emphasis on consumption of fiber.

Fresh apples with the skin on are an excellent source of fiber and are an easy way for consumers to increase their fiber intake. In fact, a recent report published by the FDA reflecting the nutrient values in 20 of the most frequently consumed raw produce items showed that one average-size apple provides 20 percent of the fiber that should be consumed daily.

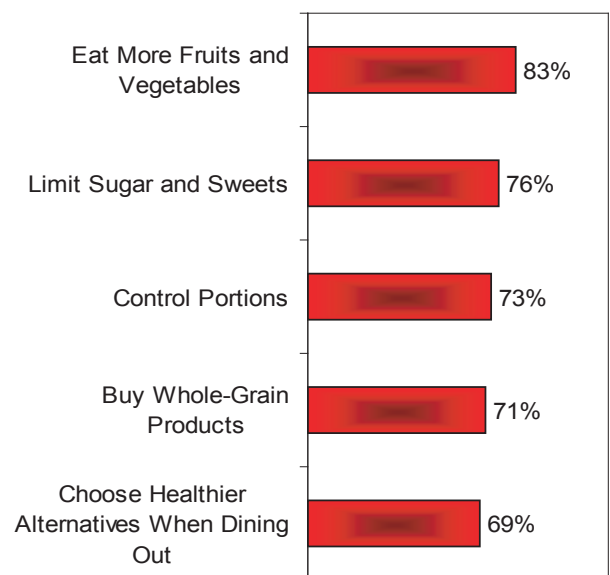
Dietary guidelines suggest Americans should eat 20-to-35 grams of fiber each day, including both soluble and insoluble fiber. About 5-to-10 grams of soluble fiber, the type found in apples, is recommended. For children 3 years of age and older, the suggested daily fiber intake is the child's age plus 5, giving a total number of grams that should be consumed to support good health.

In addition, high-fiber foods have been credited with healthy digestive function, reducing cholesterol levels, and lowering the risk of coronary heart disease and Type 2 diabetes. In a June 2006 study by the American Dietetic Association, the results pointed specifically to the lack of fiber in the American diet as a risk factor for weight gain and obesity. Both are common factors that can lead to high cholesterol, heart disease and diabetes.

For more information log onto www.adajournal.org and select the September 2005 issue.

Research Corner

Top Five Methods Shoppers Use to Lose or Maintain Weight* (Percent of All Shoppers)



N=1000

* Multiple responses mean that totals may not equal 100 percent.

Shopping For Health 2005, Food Marketing Institute

Nutrition Roundup from Stemilt Growers

The average apple offers more than meets the eye

The average American who eats an average-size apple gets a much greater nutrient punch than previously thought by selecting and consuming that all-American piece of fruit.

That's according to a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) report indicating the average apple is much larger today, providing a much greater percentage of the recommended daily allowances for nutrients that lead to good health.

The FDA evaluated apples as part of its regular review of




The average-size apple in today's supermarket is much larger than in the past, prompting the FDA to recently increase the nutritional content for a one-apple serving.

the 20 most frequently consumed raw fruits and vegetables in the United States. The FDA is responsible for analyzing nutritional values of the top 20 in accordance with the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990. The agency's analysis is conducted every four years.

Based on information submitted by the U.S. Apple Association, an industry trade group based in Vienna, Va., the FDA increased the portion size assigned to a typical apple serving. The agency has long defined a serving as one medium apple weighing 154 grams or 5.5 ounces. The serving size was set based on 1975 market data for the majority of apples sold in supermarkets.

U.S. Apple officials asserted that current market data shows retailers are selling significantly larger apples. The organization stated that apple growers have adapted to consumers' tastes and preferences in the last 30 years by growing and marketing larger apples. As a result, most apples in stores weigh an average 264 grams, and consumers are benefiting from many more nutrients every time they eat an apple.

The FDA agreed, reporting that an average apple offers 5 grams of fiber, up from 3 grams, and 260 milligrams of potassium, an increase from 160 milligrams. The adjusted information means that every time consumers eat an apple they get 20 percent of the fiber and 7 percent of the potassium recommended daily for good health. That's up from 12 percent and 5 percent respectively. 

Baked Apples with Cranberries

Preparation time: 30 minutes plus baking time

- 4 medium red firm-fleshed apples
- 1 cup fresh or dried cranberries
- 1/3 cup pure maple syrup
- 1/4 cup brown sugar, packed
- 2 teaspoons unsalted butter
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Cream (optional)



Apples & Good Health: the more, the better

The originators of the saying, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away," may have sensed many years ago what research is showing is fact: apple consumption contributes to good health.

A study completed by Cornell University in Ithaca, NY, and published in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry*, March 2005, pointed to phytochemicals in apples as the substances responsible for preventing mammary cancer. Phytochemicals are found only in plants and have positive biological effects on humans.

In the study, rats were given phytochemicals that simulated the amounts present in whole apples. They were fed differing levels equivalent to what a human would experience if he consumed one, three, and six apples a day. The study demonstrated that the extracts effectively inhibited mammary cancer growth in rats. Apples are commonly consumed, making them a major contributor of phytochemicals in American diets and a tool to fight cancer.

Another study published in the journal *Neurology* in October, 2005, underscores the importance of eating fruit to prevent strokes. A group of physicians in France set out to find evidence showing that eating fruits and vegetables decreases strokes. They gathered combined information from seven studies conducted between 1970 and 2004, and reviewed the information. Five studies were from the United States, one was from Europe, and the third from Japan.

The combined information showed that eating fruit reduced the risk of having a stroke. Each additional serving of fruit consumed per day decreased the risk an added 11 percent. The researchers speculated that this positive effect from eating fruit was due to the lowered blood pressure and cholesterol levels produced by fruit consumption. Researchers believe the phytochemicals in apples help reduce blood pressure and cholesterol, which are both strong risk factors for stroke. For more information go to the Oct. 25, 2005 issue of the journal, *Neurology* at www.neurology.org.



Pre-heat oven to 375°F. Partially core apples, starting at the stem end, removing all the seeded core, leaving bottom intact. Peel each of the apples, leaving at least 1/4 of the peel on the bottom of the apple. Place in a shallow oil-sprayed baking dish. Fill each apple with cranberries and scatter remaining cranberries in baking dish. Pour maple syrup over apples, sprinkle with brown sugar and top with 1/2 teaspoon butter and a sprinkling of cinnamon. Bake, basting occasionally, for 35-45 minutes, or until apples are tender and soft. Remove and allow to cool briefly. To serve, place each apple in a serving dish, spoon on syrup from the baking dish and serve warm with cream, if desired. Serves: 4.

Provides 1 cup of fruit per serving. Color Group(s): Red

Nutrition Information per Serving: calories: 310, total fat: 2.0g, saturated fat: 1.2g, % calories from fat: 6%, % calories from saturated fat: 4%, protein: 0g, carbohydrates: 79g, cholesterol: 5mg, dietary fiber: 7g, sodium: 8mg

Recipe courtesy of Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH). All PBH endorsed recipes meet nutrition standards that maintain fruits and vegetables as healthy foods.