



High Intake of Dietary Fiber Not Associated with Reduced Colorectal Cancer Risk

In a meta-analysis combining data from 13 studies, high intake of dietary fiber was not associated with reduced risk of colorectal cancer. Dietary fiber has been hypothesized to reduce the risk of colorectal cancer, although both studies of populations in different countries and case-control epidemiological studies have found that when dietary intake increases, risk of colorectal cancer falls. Other types of studies, such as prospective cohort studies that track large groups of people in this country, have found no association between dietary fiber intake and either risk of colorectal cancer or adenomas (colon polyps, which are often precursors of colorectal cancer). More importantly, randomized clinical trials of dietary fiber supplementation have failed to show reductions in the recurrence of colorectal adenomas. Researchers that included over 750,000 men and women who were followed up for 6 to 20 years across studies.

During the follow-up, approximately 8,100 colorectal cancer cases were identified. Among the studies,

median (midpoint) energy-adjusted dietary fiber intake ranged from 14 to 28 g/d in men and from fiber varied across studies, with cereals as a major contributor to dietary fiber intake in the European studies and fruits and vegetables as the main sources in the North American studies.

Dietary fiber intake was significantly associated with a 16% lower risk of colorectal cancer in the highest quintile compared with the lowest, and the association remained but weakened slightly after adjusting for multivitamin use and total energy intake and even more when dietary folic acid intake was adjusted for, all factors thought to influence risk. And when other dietary factors, such as red meat, total milk, and alcohol intake, were also taken into account, the results were not significant. Although high dietary fiber intake may not have a major effect on the risk of colorectal cancer, a diet high in dietary fiber from whole plant foods has been related to lower risks of other chronic conditions such as heart disease and diabetes. (JAMA. 2005; 294:2849-2857.)

Source: *Nutrition Today*, Vol. 41, No. 1, January/February, 2006.

Food Marketing Study Finds Broad Effort Needed to Promote Healthier Products and Diet

According to a new report from the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, food and beverage marketing targeted to children ages 12 years and under may lead these children to request and consume high-calorie, low-nutrient products. The report is a review of the influence of good marketing on diets of children and youth.

Because dietary preferences and eating patterns from early in life and set the stage for an individual's long-term health prospects, changes are needed to reshape children's awareness of healthy dietary choices, the report says. Manufacturers and restaurants are urged to direct more of their resources to developing and marketing child- and youth-oriented foods, drinks, and meals that are higher in nutrients and lower in calories, fat, salt, and added sugars.

Many factors shape children's dietary habits and thus, leadership from both the public and the private sectors will be needed to redirect the nation's focus toward healthier products. The IOM committee called on the government to enhance nutritional standards,

incentives, and public policies to promote the marketing of healthier foods and beverages. In addition, schools, parents, and the media were urged to work with the government and industry to pursue initiatives that support healthful diets for children and youth. If voluntary efforts by the industry fail to successfully shift the emphasis of television advertising during children's programming away from high-calorie, low-nutrient products to healthier fare, the committee that wrote the report urges that the Congress enact legislation to mandate changes on both broadcast and cable television.

The special attention to food and beverage marketing practices was felt justified because of the increase in new products targeted specifically to children and the youth over the past decade and media's increasing role in specializing young people.

Companies spent more than \$11 billion on marketing foods, beverages, and meals to US children and youth in 2004, and 4 of the top 10 items that children ages 8 to 12 years say that they can buy without parental permission are either food or beverages. (*Nutrition Today Editorial Advisory Board member - IOM committee that developed the report*).

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