

Your Fabulous, Forgotten Friend — Fiber

by Vicki Griffin

Is it possible to curb cravings and cut calories without the miserable aftertaste of hunger and unhappiness? The answer is yes. The place to begin is by eating more fiber foods and choosing healthful plant fats and sugar from the whole fruit. Plant foods include an amazing array of tastes, colors, and textures to please even the pickiest palate and relentless appetite! Plant foods are satisfying and reduce hunger between meals.

Simple changes can produce profound results. Fred could not get through the day without consuming hard candy and soda pop at frequent intervals. He suffered from fatigue, irritability, and had trouble sleeping. The doctors ruled out any specific disorder, so he examined his habits and decided to try just one change. He said: “I became convinced my problems were due to sugar addiction, and I decided to try something new. I prayed for courage and rather than reaching for candy first thing in the morning, I grabbed a fresh, crisp apple or peach. ... It was hard at first, but very soon I began incorporating fresh fruits and vegetables, salads and whole grains into my meals. I began to enjoy the food and even look forward to it. Before long I no longer had the urge to snack at all! I feel better, sleep better, and am free from my addiction for the first time in years!”

Your stomach holds about four cups of food. When you eat fiber foods, your pouch gets full before you eat too many calories. Fiber foods are lower in calories and high in satisfaction. Instead of a donut and coffee for breakfast, try a half grapefruit, some fresh strawberries, whole wheat toast with peanut butter and applesauce, and a cup of fortified soy milk.

Fiber-rich foods also help maintain consistent serotonin levels. Severe calorie-restricted diets and very high protein, low carbohydrate diets cause a drop in brain serotonin, a hormone associated with mood, appetite, and cravings. If your serotonin level drops you may feel down, which may cause a craving for sweets. Balance your serotonin levels with high fiber foods rich in complex carbohydrates, such as beans, legumes, whole grains, pasta, leafy vegetables, fresh fruits, and nuts.

God’s plan for healthful eating is not about deprivation, it’s about addition — adding more wholesome, fiber foods to your diet, and eliminating foods that stress you, drain you of energy, and add unwanted pounds. So, power-up your life with your fabulous, forgotten friend — fiber.

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