LDL Program: Fiber and LDL

Lifestyle choices can play a significant role in lowering LDL cholesterol, specifically increasing dietary fiber. Increased consumption of fiber can help to decrease LDL cholesterol as the fiber binds with and helps to remove the cholesterol from the body. Some additional benefits of fiber include increased satiety, decreased consumption of high-calorie foods, increased gut health, weight loss, and regularity. You may be wondering which foods contain fiber. Fiber comes from plant foods such as grains, fruits, and vegetables.

There are two different types of dietary fiber:

**Soluble Fiber**

This type of fiber breaks down in water, turning into a thick gel. Sources of soluble fiber include oats, beans, peas, barley, nuts, seeds, and the fleshy parts of fruits and vegetables.

**Insoluble Fiber**

This type of fiber does not break down in water and remains intact. It acts as a sponge, helping to promote bowel motility. Sources of insoluble fiber include fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, wheat bran, and whole grain foods.

**Fiber Recommendations**

To reap the benefits, we need to consume a certain amount of fiber daily. The recommendations vary between men and women and decrease after the age of 50. It is recommended that women consume 25-28g fiber/day and 22g fiber/day if greater than 50 years old. For men, the recommendations are 31-34g fiber/day and 28g fiber/day if greater than 50 years old. To meet fiber recommendations, choose foods that are fiber-rich, make half of your grains whole, and add plant foods to all meals. Make sure to increase fiber slowly and drink plenty of water to prevent GI distress. When fiber targets are met, LDL cholesterol can decrease by 20-40 points in 3 months.

**Activity: Fiber Matching Game**

Match the concepts on the left with their descriptions on the right!

1. Soluble fiber
2. Insoluble fiber
3. Fiber benefits
4. 20-40 points
5. Sources of soluble fiber
6. Sources of insoluble fiber
7. 25-28 g fiber/day
8. 31-34 g fiber/day

Answer Key: 1.e, 2.h, 3.c, 4.b, 5.g, 6.d, 7.a, 8.f

- Fiber recommendations for women.
- LDL cholesterol point decrease when fiber targets are met.
- Decreased serum and total LDL cholesterol, blood glucose control, increased satiety, increased gut health, weight loss, regularity, and decreased consumption of high-calorie foods.
- Fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, wheat bran, and whole grain foods.
- Fiber that breaks down in water, turning into a thick gel.
- Fiber recommendations for men.
- Oats, beans, peas, barley, nuts, seeds, and the fleshy parts of fruits and vegetables.
- Fiber that does not break down in water and remains intact. Acts as a sponge to promote bowel motility.

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