[IMAGE]

Get Your Fiber On: The Power of Psyllium

By Peter Finkle

For anyone with irregularity, including those on a low-carb or gluten-free diet prone to not getting enough fiber, doctors often recommend psyllium husks to provide extra fiber in their daily intake. On contact with water, psyllium seed husk thickens into a gel-like substance. This acts like a broom to sweep waste from the colon, so it does not get re-absorbed through the colon wall back into the bloodstream to recirculate in the body.

Psyllium also keeps the lining of the colon healthier, since it cleans out pockets in the colon that may accumulate toxic waste material. Since psyllium husk fiber provides a soft bulk and mass in the colon, it makes elimination easier and more comfortable. Unlike stimulant laxatives, psyllium husks are gentle and not habit forming.

Numerous medical studies show that psyllium husk can help lower high LDL "bad" cholesterol levels, helping to support heart health. It also helps to maintain healthy cholesterol levels, including "good" high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol in the body's bloodstream, which can help carry bad LDL cholesterol from the body. Taking psyllium husk daily can be a good preventive measure for heart health as well as digestive health.

For weight control, high-fiber foods like psyllium husks can help promote satiety, or a feeling of fullness. Psyllium husk also supports health and weight maintenance by helping to maintain the body's blood sugar levels in the normal range, slowing and leveling off the release of sugar into the bloodstream. This reduces stress on the body and minimizes the blood sugar spikes and crashes that often lead to hunger pangs. This approach can be particularly helpful when psyllium husk is taken with meals high in sugar or simple carbohydrates, such as pasta and white breads.

Psyllium caps and whole husks can be taken daily for as long as desired. When used in recommended amounts, they should not interfere with the absorption of vitamins and other nutrients. Talk to your doctor for more information.

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