

New forms of dietary fiber to boost health

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High-fiber foods are on the way to becoming tastier and more appealing to consumers thanks to new types of dietary fiber now under development. These consumer friendlier forms of fiber, which could be a boon to health, are the topic of an article in the current issue of Chemical & Engineering News (C&EN), ACS' weekly newsmagazine.

C&EN Associate Editor Jyllian Kemsley notes that [dietary fiber](#) plays key roles in human health. Fiber creates a feeling of fullness that can reduce calorie intake, and provides an energy source for beneficial bacteria in the digestive tract. Studies link high fiber diets to a reduced risk of diseases such as diabetes and colon cancer. However, Americans on average eat only about 15 grams of fiber per day, barely half the recommended amount. Getting consumers to eat more fiber can be difficult, particularly when people find some high-fiber foods unpalatable, Kemsley notes.

Scientists and food manufacturers are hoping that a new type of food fiber, called digestion-resistant starch, will help boost fiber intake without agitating the palate. Some scientists are trying to produce these new fibers by heating or chemically altering existing starches. Others are focusing on engineering plants, such as wheat and rice, so that they can produce these fibers naturally. One study found that when a group of men ate pieces of white bread containing a form of the new fiber, their blood glucose and insulin levels dropped by nearly half.

More information: "New Fibers for Foods". This story is available at pubs.acs.org/cen/science/88/8849sci1.html

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