4.2: Benefits of Fiber

Learning Objectives

- Identify the health benefits of eating a diet high in fiber.

Health Benefits of Fiber in the Diet

Fruits, vegetables, and whole grains all contain fiber. Americans typically do not consume the recommended amount of fruits, vegetables, or whole grains. Only 12.2% of adults meet the daily fruit recommendation; only 9.3% meet the daily vegetable recommendation. The recommendation for grains is that at least 50% of the grains we eat should be whole grains. According to a recent National Center for Health Statistics Data Brief, Americans consume ~16% of their grains as whole grains. However, research indicates that consuming higher amounts of dietary fiber decreases the risk for Type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease.

Benefits of fiber include:

- improved blood glucose control (fiber helps delay the absorption of glucose into the blood)
- potential aid for weight control (fiber helps provide a feeling of fullness)
- helps reduce blood cholesterol levels
- supports digestion and optimizes colon health by helping to prevent:
  - constipation
  - colon cancer
  - diverticulosis (out-pockets of the colon; see Figure\(\PageIndex{1}\)) and diverticulitis (inflamed out-pockets)
Key Takeaways

- Fruits, vegetables, and whole grains contribute fiber to our diets.
- Consuming higher amounts of fiber can benefit blood glucose control, weight management, heart health, and colon health.

References


