

## **MORE FIBER MAY HELP WOMEN STAY SLIM say researchers**

**9/19/2005- Dieters are bombarded with messages about low-carb, high-protein and low-fat approaches to weight loss, but new research from Tufts University suggests that they should also consider placing greater emphasis on fiber in their diet.**

BMI In a study published in the September issue of the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, researchers set out to examine the association between variables in the diet and body mass index (BMI), the most common measurement of overweight (BMI over 30) and obesity (over 25).

They based their inquiries on data from 4539 adults aged 20 to 59 years, who participated in the Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals between 1994 and 1996.

Of these, 1,932 reported a plausible energy intake – that is, within a 22 percent margin of predicted energy requirements for the average of two 24-hour recalls. Only around five percent of these reported consuming the adequate intake of fiber (established by the new dietary reference intake to be 3.0g/MJ for an 8.4 MJ/day or 2000 kcal/day diet)

However only in the women reporting plausible energy intake was fiber seen to have an affect on BMI in women. Its interaction with percentage energy from fat and energy density also seemed to have an independent association with BMI.

For them, a low-fiber, high-fat diet (consisting of less than 1.5 g/MJ fiber and fat making up 35 percent or more of total energy) diet came with the greatest risk of being overweight or obese.

In the plausibly reporting men, only percentage energy from fat was associated with BMI.

These results somewhat confounded the researchers' expectations, since they hypothesized fiber intake would be inversely associated with BMI in all plausibly reporting subjects, independent of other dietary composition and socio-demographic variables. The reason for the different results for the two sexes is not known.

They concluded: **“Weight control advice for US women should place greater emphasis on consumption of fiber.”**

Beyond weight control, a fiber-rich diet has been shown to confer a wide range of health benefits for both men and women, such as a reduction of blood cholesterol levels, a reduced risk of digestive diseases and a possible reduction in the risk of heart disease.

In the light of these benefits and study's indication that fiber intake is inadequate across the US population as a whole, the researchers also say that increased consumption should be more widely promoted to both men and women. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, published in January of this year, advise that adults consume between 25-30g of fiber a day. Good sources of dietary fiber include cereals, nuts, whole-grains, fruits and vegetables.