Fiber is Your Friend

WHAT IS FIBER?
Fiber is a substance found only in plants such as fruits, vegetables, and grains. The part of the plant fiber that you eat is called dietary fiber and is an important part of a healthy diet. Dietary fiber is made up of two main types—insoluble and soluble. Both types of fiber are important to our health and aid in weight loss. Insoluble fiber is very important to maintain proper intestinal health. Low fiber diets have been associated with diverticulosis and other intestinal problems.

GOOD SOURCES OF SOLUBLE FIBER:
- Oats and other whole grains, peas, beans, some fruits such as apples, melons and pitted fruit.
- Psyllium (pronounced sil'e-um)

SOLUBLE FIBER BENEFITS:
- Delayed emptying of the stomach, contributing to early fullness and decreased appetite.
- Reduces blood cholesterol levels, improves heart health.
- High fiber foods tend to be more low-glycemic, and work to reduce sudden increases in blood sugar after meals.

TIPS TO INCREASE FIBER TO 35 GRAMS PER DAY:
- Consume at least three, 1-cup servings per day of vegetables.
- Eat at least two servings per day of fruit.
- Consume 4 one-half cup servings of whole grains: oats, brown rice, bran, quinoa, barley and whole wheat.
- Eat legumes daily (try bean dips or spreads such as hummus or black bean dip).
- Snack on air-popped popcorn (sprinkle your popcorn with nutritional yeast and sea salt as a yummy alternative to butter).
- Add oatmeal, oat bran, wheat germ, or rice bran to hot cereal, yogurt, meat loaf, meatballs or hamburgers.
- Substitute whole grain flour for white flour in baking recipes.
- Drink at least 64 ounces of water daily to minimize intestinal discomfort from sudden increases in fiber content.

† Sources: American Dietetic Association
www.eatright.org/Public/NutritionInformation
www.nhlbi.nih.gov/chd/Tipsheets/solfiber.htm

Dr. Jana Hagen brings more than a decade of knowledge and experience in Naturopathic Medicine and Clinical Laboratory Medicine to her family medicine practice at The University Health Clinic in Seattle, Washington. In addition to naturopathic primary and preventive care, she has additional experience in relapse prevention, neurotransmitter rebalancing, sinusitis (from allergies, colds & flus) and sustainable weight-loss via metabolic enhancement. Dr. Hagen is one of the few experienced physicians in the Seattle Area offering naturopathic care for relapse prevention.