

**Sensible Weight Loss**  
*with Fiber-rich Foods*

*By Martine Carlina*

We all know someone on one diet or another. Medical researchers warn that obesity is reaching epidemic proportions in Canada and it is estimated that \$2 billion was spent in 1997 to treat conditions related to obesity including diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease. This said, why is it that we cannot overcome weight issues? Between the Atkins plan, the Zone diet, the Blood Type diet and years of fads, we're more confused than ever and obesity is reaching an all time high.

What are we doing wrong? To answer this complex question, it's important to remember that we're all different. While it's impractical to think that one solution to weight is the be-all-end-all, there is one common problem that affects many of us. That problem is that we lack high quality and consistent dietary fiber. According to health authorities, most of us get only 10-15 g of fiber per day. A moderate fiber intake is 20-25 g and a high fiber diet is approximately 25-35 g per day.

There are two types of fiber: water-soluble and water-insoluble. Soluble fiber dissolves in water and is degraded by the bacteria in your colon. It is typically found in fruits, oats, barley, psyllium and some beans and it is known for increasing stool volume and stool water content. Because soluble fiber forms a gel in the intestines, it is beneficial for regulating the flow of waste material and it also works to slow stomach emptying time and the absorption of glucose in the blood stream.

Insoluble fiber doesn't dissolve in water and passes through your digestive system largely unchanged. It is typically found in cereals, wheat bran, stalks and peels of fruits and vegetables. Insoluble fiber is also found in both hemp and flax powder, which are derived from seedcake, a residual product created by crushing hemp or flax grain for oil. Insoluble fiber accelerates the transit time of fecal matter, increases fecal weight, slows down starch hydrolysis and (like soluble fiber) delays glucose absorption. This means softer, larger feces and increased frequency of defecation. As the feces move through your intestine, they scour intestinal walls and remove waste matter and even carcinogens from your system.

The most concentrated insoluble fiber product on the market today is the hemp powder. Hemp powder is made up of 40 percent high quality, easily digested complete protein. Hemp powder is an excellent meal replacement when mixed, shaken or blended in juice, water, or smoothies. As insoluble fiber accelerates transit time in the gastrointestinal tract, it can help to increase food metabolism, an important step towards weight loss. Hemp powder can also help provide satiety (a feeling of being full), which is important in modifying food consumption when trying to lose weight. As the carbohydrate and fiber are equal to one another, hemp powder has a low glycemic index, making it particularly beneficial to those with blood sugar management issues. It is very important to note that when you increase fiber intake, you should also increase water consumption.

Although weight loss strategies may seem tricky and confusing, if you look past the hype, practical solutions tend to make good common sense. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree, and in the battle of the bulge, it is often the least complicated solution that may be the answer.