

**Food Plays Role
In Some Diseases**

'You are what you eat,' the old saying goes. Food plays a role in the development and treatment of certain diseases. Researchers have found a link between disease, treatment and diet in certain types of heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, diabetes and other chronic illnesses.

The picture is not yet crystal clear, but enough evidence has been collected to recommend that people be concerned about fat, sugar and dietary fiber intakes, says Sarah Hinton, extension nutrition specialist, North Carolina State University.

All three have a place in a well-balanced diet. Fat and sugar should be eaten in moderation, and special care should be taken to include fiber in the daily diet, says the extension specialist.

Fat is not just found in fat cells. It is in all of the cells of the body. We couldn't exist without it. But it is possible to get too much of a good thing, and Americans get 40 to 50 percent of their calories from fat. Thirty percent is the recommended allowance.

Another 15 to 20 percent of the average North Carolinian's calories come from sugar. People eat 100 to 125 pounds each year. Too much fat and too much sugar lead to obesity. "Obesity is probably the most common nutritional problem affecting North Carolinians today," Mrs. Hinton says.

Obesity is a risk factor for developing cardiovascular diseases, high blood pressure, arteriosclerosis, gall bladder disease, diabetes mellitus and liver diseases. Sugar can also contribute to tooth decay, one of the most widely spread, costly and preventable diseases directly related to nutrition in the United States today.

Distinguish between carbohydrates, such as starch and fiber which are good for the body, and concentrated sugars. The naturally occurring sugars such as those in fruit and other plants are better for someone worried about his weight than sugar or honey.

Complex carbohydrates also supply dietary fiber or roughage in the diet. Fiber is the part of plants not broken down in the digestive tract. It aids the movement of waste products through the intestine. Fiber can be useful in treating constipation and diverticular disease, but there is conflicting evidence as to whether it prevents these disorders.

To be sure you are getting enough fiber each day, eat whole grain breads and cereals, fresh fruits and raw vegetables.

Exercise and Weight
Engaging in exercise a short time after eating may burn off more calories than if you exercise on an empty stomach, according to a study conducted at Cornell University. The researchers also report that exercise performed a day after a day of over-indulgence helps to offset some of the weight gain from some of the excess calories.

The study further suggests that having larger meals early in the day when most people are more active may be best for weight control.

The results are reported in a recent issue of Diet and Nutrition.

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