

Living well: Optimizing your nutrition & detoxifying your kitchen
Session II: Fiber

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (00:00):

All right, let's talk about fiber. That's the first topic that we're covering tonight. So when you think about fiber, I want you to think about a cleaning crew that's entering your body and helping your body do a better job in cleaning. So, it's assisting your body's natural detoxification. But what I want you to keep in mind is that fiber —and I know right now there's so much talk about fiber, it has become so popular, and I love that — but what I want you to keep in mind is that fiber is one piece of a puzzle with many pieces. It's just one topic. Five things of fiber can do for you is assist with weight management; help reduce estrogen levels; promote a healthy gut microbiome; help balance our blood sugars; and support our immunity. All of these in tandem help reduce breast cancer risk and increase thrivership.

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (01:02):

The target number that I like to recommend for my patients is 30 to 35 grams of fiber for optimal breast cancer protection. And it's not an arbitrary number. There are a lot of studies out there looking at women who ingested 20 grams, and over 20 grams, crossing over into 30 grams with greater outcome and results. So, one of the key things I do want to stress is that although we're targeting a number, which is the 30 to 35 grams of fiber, we also want to diversify our fiber sources. So there's a target number, and then we diversify. So what do I mean by that? There are different types of fibers: insoluble fiber and soluble fiber. Within soluble fibers, there are other special types of fibers known as prebiotic fibers that are found in foods like garlic, asparagus chia seeds, avocados, jicama, and mushrooms.

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (02:05):

And then we have these other special fibers known as beta-glucans, and those are also very important. So, we want to diversify the different types of fibers and also have a target in mind on a daily basis. Consistency is key. Fiber assists us with weight management. I mentioned that in the beginning, and weight management is very important when it comes to cancer risk reduction and thrivership. Foods and the different types of foods that we ingest can help make a difference. I'm going to share an example here. This is just a bread, for example. So, on your left here, you see a slice of bread. That's 100% flourless. And if you look at the ingredient list very simple whole intact grains, no flour at all. Now this slice over here has a bunch of grains, but it also has flour.

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (03:06):

The difference here is that your body is going to have to work hard and break through the barriers of these intact grains on the bread, on the left here. And that's going to create more work for your body in order to break that down. So, in a sense, I want you to think of it as if you're comparing, taking the elevator or the stairs to get to the 10th floor. Both are going to get you there, but one is actually going to give you a workout. In this case, we're looking at an internal workout exercise within the body, which is great. It also helps balance our blood sugars. There are many things that I recommend looking out for when it comes to shopping for bread. But one tip here is to do the squeeze test. If you can take a bread and squish it really easily into a ball, like right here, we see like the, the Dave bread right here, then it's not as valuable as one that will resist the squish.

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (04:02):

So, just one little tip on shopping for bread. The second thing that fiber can do for you is it can help reduce estrogen levels. So, what you can see here is that we have some hormones like estrogen, maybe cholesterol, another hormone, and fiber helps remove excess estrogen and hormones from the body, which is key when it comes to lowering the risk of breast cancer and increasing thrivership. When we don't get enough fiber, basically these the extra estrogen will get circulated and go back into the bloodstream, which is what we want to avoid. This has been studied. There have been different studies looking at different diets, one that's high in fiber, primarily a plant-based diet, versus one that has less fiber here. And what they have found is there 'was an increased amount of estrogen in the stool, and lower levels in the blood as well.

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (05:08):

So it was a very direct kind of correlation there. The third thing that fiber does is that it also promotes a healthy microbiome. Now this is really, really important. Gut health is essential for those at risk or those that have been impacted by breast cancer. And I want to share with you, how these prebiotic fibers work. So, you see asparagus here. It's rich and prebiotic fiber, and prebiotic fibers are the only foods that actually have direct access into our microbiome. It feeds the good bacteria, nourishes that garden in your gut, and in turn creates what we call short-chain fatty acids, which are metabolic byproducts of products — they're postbiotics, basically. So, what you're doing here is that you're creating short-chain fatty acids, and that improves our immunity.

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (06:13):

It helps support our weight management. It helps reduce inflammation and reduce breast cancer risk. So really, really important here. And when we have a low-fiber diet, 'we're kind of starving and are we're really wilting our garden. As you can see here, the bad bacteria take over, and that in turn could weaken our immune system, make it harder for us to manage our weight, may increase inflammation, and increase cancer risk. So, we want to prevent, dysbiosis, which is an abnormal bacterial balance in the gut. When we have dysbiosis, we increase an enzyme called beta-glucuronidase, and that sends estrogen back into the blood, which is really something that we're trying to prevent. A healthy gut microbiome interestingly also can help activate phytoestrogen, plant-based estrogens, to protect us on the cellular level.

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (07:21):

Really fascinating, really interesting, a variety of foods that are rich in phytoestrogens are foods like soy, beans, legumes, flax, sesame seeds, apples, pomegranates, berries, grapes, a lot of different foods. But that's really important. So, in activating phytoestrogens that in turn can help reduce breast cancer risk and increase thrivership. A common question that I get all the time. You know, we're talking about hormones and estrogen. And a lot of my masterclass participants who are estrogen receptor-negative are asking: "What are the benefits for me?" So there are lots of benefits in increasing your fiber intake. It helps reduce, insulin levels and in turn, insulin-like growth factor-1; it assists with weight management, which is important; promotes a healthy microbiome, which supports our immune system; and, contains protective plant chemicals, as well.

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (08:29):

So, tons of benefits there. Fiber also helps regulate our blood sugars, high blood sugars, trigger high insulin levels, and in turn increase insulin-like growth factor-1, which is a pro-inflammatory growth hormone that stimulates tumor cell growth. So, all in all, modulating our blood sugars is important in decreasing breast cancer risk and increasing thrivership. And, last but not least,

fiber also helps strengthen our immunity. This is fascinating to me. If I were to dial back quite a few years, I would say, we didn't talk about this. So this is fascinating, how fiber feeds the good bacteria here and it enhances our immune system in that the good bacteria interact with our immune cells in the GI tract, and they stimulate an immune defense. Fascinating stuff. Who would've ever thought fiber enhanced immunity? Really good stuff here.

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (09:36):

And it's so simple. So, to summarize, we talked about five things fiber can do for you: assisting with weight management, reducing estrogen levels, supporting our gut health, balancing our blood sugars, and supporting our immunity. I love to talk about actionable solutions, and I hope you walk away with some tangible information. So, what can you do tomorrow to look at this and to really start to integrate things? We're looking at 30 to 35 grams a day. And what I recommend for my patients and masterclass participants is to think 10 grams before noon. Aim for about 10 grams. Really, really important to set the tone for the day, but also to really help you get there, because you could eat a bathtub full of produce vegetables, nine salads a day, and that's what it would take to get to that number.

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (10:34):

So we really need to think it through and come up with a strategy. For example, here, you've got a bowl of oatmeal that has about four grams of fiber. Just by adding a fiber booster, you can easily climb your way towards those 10 grams of fibers. So, these here are the basic four that I usually like to start with. Sprouted ground flaxseed is the first one. Chia seeds — it could be white or black chia seeds. Organic basil seeds are great as well. They're high in fiber. They do contain omega-3s, just as chia seeds do, and whole hemp seeds. There's hemp hearts, and there's whole hemp seeds. And that's also a great fiber and protein, combo and a booster. So, what you could do in the beginning, and I really believe in a phased approach, is start with your basic four boosters.

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (11:29):

And pick even one or two — you might pick one or two based on your budgetary preferences. They're all great. They're all winners. And rotate them for the first three months, let's say. Get going on those. And then as you're getting used to that concept, start to integrate other types of fiber boosters, maybe a prebiotic fiber powder to help support your gut microbiome — maybe oat fiber, maybe psyllium, but you do need a gradual approach for multiple reasons. And that's the way I would recommend doing that. What you also want to think about when you're integrating a fiber routine in the morning is you can also diversify your base, meaning the type of breakfast. So, if you're always doing oats, maybe start doing fiber cookies that we have, or a plant-based kefir, or smoothie bowl, but start that rotation, as well.

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (12:30):

And it becomes so easy because you've used a phased approach. You really want to think slow integration because that means it's more likely to stick and we're in it for the long run. We don't want quick fixes. So, here's an example. It looks like a very simple bowl of oatmeal with apple and spice and all that. But here's what I see here. You've got a base of sprouted organic oats to start, rich in beta-glucans, good fibers, support our immunity, good stuff. You've got an apple in there as well, good prebiotic fibers. You've got basil seeds as one of your fiber boosters, great fiber and omega-3s. And then after again, you're getting used to that stuff. Then you can start integrating, let's say a prebiotic fiber powder. Maybe you want to start advancing with a mushroom powder because that's rich in prebiotic fibers and beta-glucans as well.

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (13:29):

Spices — you can integrate them as well to elevate the antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. So, there's so much to this simple bowl of oatmeal. And I want you to really think about starting from the base, which we talked about in the beginning, integrate a fiber booster, then add another one, then start to elevate it some more and keep going and get used to it. You're going to have it down. You're going to be on autopilot and it's going to be such a great, great feeling. Another way to further advance your fiber intake throughout your day is to consider integrating a plant-based protein at lunch or at dinner. If you're not eating plant based 100%, that's totally fine. Just say, "OK. One of my two meals every day is going to be, a plant-based protein," because that will really, really be a difference maker.

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (14:31):

This meal here on the right, I think it's like a Turkey burger over a bed of greens, two grams of fiber. And this here we've got vegetables with black beans, and we've got 15 grams of fiber. We still have protein and fiber and I'll show you here. "You're upgrading to premium, basically, when you're incorporating these plant-based proteins, because not only are they fiber rich, they are also packed with cancer-fighting phytochemicals. They boost your gut health. They have anti-inflammatory properties. They lower insulin-like growth factor-1, which we talked about. They increase your sense of satiety as well, so they support weight management. So it's good, good, and good. And it helps you. One of the things that I do want to mention is that a lot of my masterclass participants in the beginning, they might feel like they need time to pursue this.

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (15:34):

And you don't. Keep it simple. There are so many convenient options. There are so many convenient, inexpensive options. They sure beat the cost of takeout. You can buy organic shelled edamame, and there you have it, an instantaneous plant-based protein that requires minimal attention when it comes to prep. I love recommending sprouted lentils, because not only do they take five minutes, I repeat: five minutes, to cook, the sprouting enhances nutrient absorption. So, you get more out of your food. So that's a real feel-good. It's fast. Garbanzo beans or any kind of beans in a Tetra Pak is great. There are some ready to eat options like Fillo's and other brands out there that are also already flavored. Tear open the pouch, and you're ready.

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (16:34):

So, it doesn't require a lot of work. And then on the go, there are so many different plant-based proteins that you can just throw in your purse, which is great. So, keep it simple and powerful. That is my main method. And key point for you guys is to keep it simple. So big-picture goal here, we're looking at 30 to 35 grams per day as your ultimate goal here. And I encourage you to develop a very simple action plan and get 10 grams of fiber before noon, diversify the different types of fibers that you're ingesting. And when you're ready, don't rush, advance to the next part of your day and seek some support. I think that it's really important to seek support and have accountability with a phased approach. Again, I can't stress it enough, keep it realistic and simple. Nutrition should not be complicated, just empowering. And consistency is key. When you look at research studies, when you're looking at outcomes, you really are appreciating the value of consistency. We're looking at consistency for that cumulative effect over time. If you adapt a nutritional protocol and you're rolling with it for two, three months, and then you abandon it, or you just kind of, don't really hold onto the key principles, that's not going

to give us a measurable outcome. So, it's really important to focus on that. Now we're going to open it up to questions here.

Janine Guglielmino, LBBC (18:25):

I'm going to pass it to Keneene to start asking questions, since we have a bunch of good ones.

Keneene Lewis, LBBC (18:30):

Oh, yes, we do. We have some great questions in the Q&A. A couple of people have asked, being that they had estrogen-positive breast cancer, they were told to avoid soy and phytoestrogens. Can you speak on that, or has the theory changed with that?

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (18:50):

That is a great question and has definitely changed. When you look at all the data after 2009, especially. Phytoestrogens act similar to estrogen, but they are completely the opposite in that they offer protection. Without getting too technical, they have an affinity to go to the beta receptor of a cell and therefore block the alpha receptor, which is where 'normal estrogen would attach and cause, damage — it's less favorable. So, it has a very protective effect in increasing thrivership. That's something that comes up all the time, but it is extremely protective, and I definitely would recommend eating Phytoestrogen-rich foods — as we mentioned, beans, legumes, berries, soy, flax, sesame seeds — for their protective effects, on multiple fronts. We're looking at the phytoestrogens, which block that alpha receptor, which is a huge advantage. It's basically occupying a spot, not allowing the strong estrogen to have access. And that's really, really important. Plus, these foods have all these protective phytochemicals — so, plant chemicals, many of them contain fiber as well, which is protective. So, it's good, good stuff, really good stuff. And it sure beats eating an animal-based protein. Not trying to get anybody to become a vegan here overnight, but I do have to say it's like hands down. There's no comparison.

Keneene Lewis, LBBC (20:50):

Yes. Thank you so much for answering that. Another good question we got, could you recommend some good prebiotic powder supplements?

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (20:59):

Yeah. There are quite a few out there in the market. One that's pretty popular that my patients really enjoyed is by Garden of Life. They have a plain one and it just kind of gets integrated into your food really easily. But I do want to stress that as I mentioned during the talk: that is something that I recommend integrating after you've already rotated through whatever fiber boosters that you decide that you're going to. So, focus on that first and then say, "OK, after a few months, let me start integrating some accessories." It's like building a house: you build the structure, you paint the walls, and then the chandelier comes in, and the accents come in and that's where that comes in. Similar.

Keneene Lewis, LBBC (21:48):

Perfect, perfect analogy. I love that. Another question we got: Is there a healthy benefit to freshly grinding your own flax, chia, or basil seeds?

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (22:01):

Great question. I love that. So, with flax, the answer is yes, because the barrier around the seed is really hard. So, it's very hard for the body to break down and break through that, so you can get the benefits within the seeds. Grinding is beneficial when it comes to flax seeds. I will be talking actually tonight about a flax gel that you make and that actually softens the flax seeds enough where you could ingest them whole like that. Chia seeds, the casing around the seed is a lot more permeable, and so you don't really have to grind it. You know, some argue that maybe soaking it or maybe grinding it a little bit could be helpful. Of course, it could be. But then again, there's something to say about allowing your body to work through those barriers as well, being advantageous for your blood sugars and things like that.

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (22:59):

So, I would say to answer it, I would say definitely you want to grind flax. There are also things you want to look at, in our shopping guides. Through the masterclass we pinpoint if you're going to buy flaxseed ground, how to purchase it and which to purchase. That's a long story, but everyone's busy and doesn't have time. We want to enjoy flaxseed grind, but we don't have the time to put the flax in the coffee grinder and grind it every morning in addition to everything else that we're busy with.

Keneene Lewis, LBBC (23:43):

Definitely. Another question we got: Should all fiber come directly from food, or is it OK to get fiber from supplements like gummies?

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (23:55):

Oh no. I would say definitely food. It's so easy actually to do it. It is easy to do it, with a phased approach and a strategy. So, seek out a dietitian, somebody who can lay out a strategy for you, and rely on wholesome food. We abandon supplements many times, and when it comes to fiber, you'd have to take like 10 or 20 pills. You can only pack so much psyllium in a little pill, but you could take a tablespoon and stir it into something. So, I wouldn't go the supplement route when it comes to fiber. It's so unnecessary when it's so available on so many different fronts. And it's easy; you just need a game plan.

Keneene Lewis, LBBC (24:37):

Yes. And do frozen fruits and veggies have the same fiber as fresh ones?

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (24:47):

Yes, they do. And interestingly, a lot of people apologize in our Zoom sessions. They'll say, "I used frozen. I know it's not. ..." And I'm like, "It is, it is, it's good! It's really, really good. And sometimes it's even better." Not just when it comes to your wallet — it's actually better on the nutritional front many times, because when they pick the produce it's at its peak freshness. It has more nutrients and they lock the nutrients in when they freeze it. So, it stays, as opposed to fruits and vegetables that are picked, and then they're well traveled across state lines, across country, unless you're going to a farmer's market where they picked it fresh. It's all good, but no need to apologize for frozen ever.

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (25:38):

It is so great. I love especially love buying frozen. I even buy the frozen organic because it's not as expensive as buying it fresh, and I can make smoothies for the family easily and not have to think about it. I love Costco. So, I'll go to Costco and get myself some organic blueberries and

berries frozen, and it's always available for breakfast items, even overnight oats. I'll thaw them a little bit. They have the juice. I can make chia jam out of it. And then just enjoy the fresh differently. And it's a lot more economical. I can't even imagine buying it fresh like that and needing to do all this in my home.

Keneene Lewis, LBBC (26:30):

With regard to oatmeal, is there any that we should avoid, such as quick oats or anything else?

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (26:39):

I wouldn't say avoid, but there are preferences when it comes to oatmeal. I love that question. Steel-cut oats are premium they're the crème de la crème. Why? Because your body has to go through that workout that I talked about, like with the sprouted flourless bread to break it down, which supports weight management, but also supports blood sugar modulation, which is very important. The next one's going to be rolled oats that are sprouted. I love recommending sprouted rolled oats, because again, you're going to get more nutrient 'it's going to enhance nutrient absorption — the sprouting does. And so you're going to get potentially more of those prebiotic fibers, beta-glucans, and things like that. It's not a must. But that is when you have an opportunity, then that would be something I'd recommend. Next would be the rolled oats, the organic rolled oats. And then the quick oats or anything in a packet.

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (27:45):

I really limit that to my masterclass participants when they are having to travel, for example. On multiple fronts, sometimes it's weight management and portion control and the expense of eating out, as well. 'Nature's Path makes one; it's a multi seed called Q'ia, and that's a packet that one can take. They also love taking chia seeds with one of my power spice blends in there. And they just kind of put that together, fetch some milk, some plant-based milk and some fresh fruit, like a banana. You can go to Starbucks and that's breakfast by putting that, asking for the milk. You don't need to heat it up, put your, your chia seed in there, grab a banana, or grab some fruit. And you've got a fiber-insured breakfast that's aligned with our agenda.

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (28:38):

What I love about it is that it sets the tone for the rest of your day. You're starting on such a positive note. You're thinking about self-care. You're empowered by that. And it was so simple. And of course, who doesn't love saving about \$10 on something that's usually just not nearly as good? And unless you're going out for breakfast with people, that would be great — in which case you can just take your chia if you want to, or not. You don't have to be perfect every day.

Keneene Lewis, LBBC (29:16):

And do you have any suggestions for gluten-sensitive people?

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (29:22):

I think almost everything except for the sprouted flourless bread, is gluten free. So, the oats, gluten free; chia's gluten free; the fiber boosters are gluten free; the fruits are gluten free. So, tons of options for gluten free.

Keneene Lewis, LBBC (29:38):

OK. And what about people who are following intermittent fasting and skipping breakfast? What would you suggest for them reaching their 30 grams?

Rachel Beller, MS, RDN (29:48):

Oh, I love that question. A lot of my masterclass participants will mention that they're intermittent fasting. What do I do? Where do I slot this? First I want to say that it's really important — a lot of people seem to forget — that during the window in which you choose to eat, you really need to focus on what it is that you're ingesting. We lose sight of that. We think, "Oh, I fasted and that's really my game plan and my agenda." Really, the beauty of the fasting, the main thing is really closing that store, like after '8:00 or whenever it is, because that's usually, the time when people mostly struggle: that evening time, when things quiet down. Now, what you could do is take that fiber-insured breakfast, move it over to your afternoon snack time, the '4:00 when we all start to, you know, and just enjoy it right there in that window. And it's totally fine. You're not losing out on not having a snack. 'You are having' a meal kind of snack, and that could also help with your weight management goals. And it works perfectly to move it over. It doesn't always work for everyone. Some people will 'have their workout in the morning, and then they'll start with the late fiber-insured breakfast, move their lunch over. It's really a personal thing, but it's definitely doable and easy. And I love that question.