

Does Cutting Carbs Really Work – Part 3 of 6

In this month's article, we're going to take a look at a specific kind of carbohydrate that has some really interesting properties. If I were to mix up some fructooligosaccharide (FOS) powder into a glass and have you drink it, it would taste like sugar water, and yet not a single gram of sugar would be digested by your body. This means that your body would be consuming carbohydrates but wouldn't be able to use them for energy. It's much like the cellulose that is found in vegetables – it's non-digestible by our bodies. Of course, that's not a reason to avoid vegetables, since we can still get great nutrients from them, but it just goes to show that not all food that goes into our bodies is wholly digestible. Now, back to the FOS – it tastes sweet but it doesn't get digested – why use it? Well, for one, you already consume it, as FOS, or inulin as it sometimes called, is produced naturally in over 36,000 plants worldwide (that could be around a third of the total vegetation available)! In plants, inulin is a reserve food for times when photosynthesis isn't producing enough energy. In humans, inulin provides food for the healthy bacteria that lives in our intestinal tracts.

Since the body can't digest inulin, it has a glycemic index of zero (the subject of a future article in this column), which means that our blood sugar levels does not change when ingesting it. Inside our intestines, it works to ferment the bifidobacteria, which helps to improve the bioavailability of minerals (particularly calcium) from the food we ingest. In other words, it helps our digestive tract to work more efficiently and keep a healthy population of the good bacteria inside. Because of this quality, inulin is referred to as a probiotic. Other interesting information about inulin (FOS) is that it suppresses pathogenic bacteria, which reduces liver toxins, carcinogens, food intolerances and provides additional stimulation to our immune systems. In essence, inulin is really a soluble fiber that our bodies tolerate very well. Recent studies have shown that inulin can reduce blood cholesterol and triglycerides as well and may even decrease the rate of dietary carb conversion to fat while suppressing appetite.

The average person in the US consumes about 2.6g of inulin per day, with most of this coming from wheat and onions. Sadly, this amount is not enough to effectively derive the nutritional benefits from inulin. The question then becomes how and where can we increase this amount, if that is what we desire. First off, having healthy portions of fruits and vegetables or by looking for products with inulin inside will help our bodies immensely. Outside of some lettuce on sandwiches, there's not always a pile of veggies going on at lunchtime for the average person. Stonyfield Farm's organic yogurt (found in local grocery stores) has inulin in it. The FiberSmart product also has inulin inside, and is a fantastic product to help get the digestive tract back on track. Second, using sweeteners like Stevia Leaf Extract style sweeteners with inulin in them can make a great natural sweetener with the additional bonus properties of FOS. After that, it's pretty much down to direct supplementation with powder or capsules from a health food store.

So, to recap, fructooligosaccharides (FOS or inulin) is a soluble fiber that tastes sweet, and yet doesn't have the downside effects of a refined sugar. It can be added to food or can be found in plants across the world and helps our digestive tracts to work efficiently. The average American does not necessarily consume enough FOS to reap the benefits of this carbohydrate. And, (here comes the standard disclaimer) as with most everything that can be found in a health food store, the statements above that have been obtained from a variety of sources have not been evaluated by the FDA and these products mentioned in this article are not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. For medical advice, always consult your healthcare professional.

Do You Have A Health Or Fitness Question You Want Answered?

I love hearing from all of my good friends and clients who enjoy reading my monthly newsletter. And I'm always looking to answer pressing questions you might have about anything related to health and fitness. If you have a question, tip or idea, please feel free to call me at (847) 276-7132. Perhaps I'll feature you in a future issue!

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Come Across An Interesting Diet, Weight Loss Or Fitness Product?

No need to guess if it's worth trying or wonder about its effectiveness. Just call me at (847) 276-7132 and I'll tell you...with no hassles and no obligation.

How Resolute are Your Resolutions?

With the New Year just around the corner, it's a prime time for people to start coming up with their resolutions, those changes or alterations that they'll work toward in the year ahead. Sadly, it's not uncommon for people's resolutions to become not-so-resolute as the weeks and months pass. Here are some tips to keep your resolutions rock solid...

- 1. Write it down!** Napoleon Hill talks about reviewing your written declarations in the morning and before bed in his book, Think and Grow Rich. It's a great practice to get into, and can even be modified by using index cards, Post-It Notes, sending time-delayed e-mails to your self or letters in the mail, etc. Outside of the principle of consistently keeping your eyes on the target, just writing down an idea takes it from the intangible form of a concept into the tangible form of something real (a note, in this example).
- 2. Keep your resolutions simple!** That's right, I said keep it simple. Why set a goal to lose *all* the weight when a stepwise goal to lose an inch around the waist is more easily attainable? Yes, we want to have large big picture resolutions, but most people look at the size of the mountain in front of them and pack it up before they even climb very far. Set resolution milestones that will work you toward that larger picture. After all, there's no law that says resolutions are only for January 1.
- 3. Get educated!** The more you can educate yourself about the topic concerning your resolution, the more likely you will attain that goal. In today's day and age, we have before us the double-edged sword of information. While it is immediately available from a wide variety of sources, we must also question the sources as credible. To this end, the more you can learn about a subject matter you are working to be more resolute on, the better perspective you may have to make good decisions and stick with your resolutions.
- 4. Party!** Yep, when you've reached a milestone toward your resolution, reward yourself. Of course, make sure the reward doesn't take you backwards away from your goal, but have fun nonetheless. Doing spontaneously fun activities is a great way to keep the spirit of movement alive and rub some of those stress edges off at the same time.
- 5. Think about teaming up!** If you can find someone else that has a similar resolution, it can help to have a buddy in the system working with you. Outside of the accountability side of things, great friendships can be built over common goals and moving stepwise toward their achievement.

Why Should I Avoid Trans-Fatty Acids?

Trans-fats can have serious effects on your health. Within the next few years, the FDA has required that all nutritional labels display the total amount of trans-fatty acids that are contained in food products. Some companies have taken the initiative to start making this information displayed while most products are lacking the additional labeling. In this article, we'll take a look at trans-fats and see why it might be worth your while to check the upcoming labels on the foods you eat.

Trans-fats are so named because of the nature of the chemical bonds that happen in the fat molecules. These molecules (also called lipids), have been hydrogenated, a fancy word that means adding hydrogen atoms to the chemical structure. The reason hydrogen gets added to the fat is to change its chemical properties. Normally, lipids like oils don't like to be very solid unless they are at low temperatures. This is so due to the structure of their molecules, normally filled with *cis*- style chemical bonds (meaning on the same side). If a fat has too many *cis*- bonds, it won't pack well into solid form. It's kind of like trying to mush steel wool down into a block of metal by squeezing it – it's probably not going to happen. By hydrogenating the fat, it is possible to hammer out some of these bent bonds and straighten them, kind of like pulling that steel wool into straight strands of wire. Once the bends are taken out of the molecule by converting the *cis*- bonds to *trans*- bonds, the fat can be compressed into solid form much easier.

Why would someone want to mush oil into a solid at room temperature? So they could make margarine or other vegetable spreads, for instance. In addition, certain food products won't have a pleasing consistency or last on the shelves in the grocery stores unless they are packed with hydrogenated fats. So in order to protect profit margins and make other products to compete with natural ones like butter, companies developed hydrogenated or trans-fats to help out their bottom lines. Combine this with huge advertising budgets over the years and you've got yourself a bulk of confusion over a technique that has been around for some time.

All of this becomes important when we look at the fact that the chemical structure of trans-fats behave more like plastic than they do like food, and your body would much rather have food than plastic. Trans-fats don't break down in your body the same way that a natural fat does, and that can cause a number of digestive problems. In addition, anything that your body views as non-natural gets passed through the detoxification center of the body – the liver. Our livers tend to get barraged these days from processed foods and non-nutritional choices. All of this can cause long-term problems in our systems that aren't always as simple as indigestion. Finally, if you're cooking with oil and its temperature goes too high, the oil will actual start to hydrogenate itself and break down. That means that we can make our own efforts to be healthy work against us by not knowing the proper temperatures to cook our food.

For more information on how to identify and work around trans-fatty acids, please feel free to call me at (847) 276-7132 and ask me – I'd be glad to provide more information.

The Cheesecake Comparison Test™

Want to figure out if a particular meal is better or worse for your body? There's a simple little test that can help make the decision for you. Simply take the total number of calories in a meal and divide it by 330 (the number of calories in a piece of Eli's® Original Plain Cheesecake). Here's an example...

A breakfast consisting of two large fried eggs, two cups of fresh cantaloupe and an 8oz. glass of 2% milk has 417 calories, giving it a respectable score of **1.26**. On the flipside, a McDonald's Sausage, Egg and Cheese McGriddle® breakfast value meal has 840 calories, a whopping score of **2.54** (Consider that most people need 2000-2400 calories in a day.)

The more you can stay close to the **1.5** rating, the more likely you're in a good range for calories per meal.

Peak Performance!

In this month's newsletter, the topic is time. Time is that one commodity we have too much of in our younger years and not enough of in our later years. Time management isn't really about using a day planner or Palm Pilot – instead, it's about learning to keep our big picture in mind while making the choice to spend our time wisely. Much like spending money, it can be helpful to write down how you spend your time for a day and then take a look back and see if you really did those things that you wanted to do. Sadly, most people spend their time spinning their wheels and not really getting anywhere.

Test yourself by focusing on a small list of things to do during the day and making sure that you continue to move toward their completion. This is a great way to start prioritizing your day. Keep it up, and you'll be heading toward Peak Performance!

"You can't wait for inspiration. You have to go after it with a club."

- Jack London

Funky Facts...

↳ Did you know that organic food has as much as *forty times* the amount of nutrients that non-organic food has?

↳ The average person handles 600 pounds of paper per year, and that doesn't include during work or at a business! Now that's a lot!

I'd Love to Hear From YOU!

Whether your goal is to lose weight, get in the best shape of your life, or anything in between, I can help you.

I'd love to hear from you – even if you just want to say "Hi!"

I'm full of energy, and people tell me – a pretty fun person to talk to. So please don't hesitate to call me up with any questions you have about health and fitness related issues. There's never any pressure and no obligation. I'm a resource...and a friend!

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Eat What You Want for the Holidays!

You've got it – I said eat what you want for the holidays. Most people dread the holidays and respond to the gains in their waistline with a New Year's resolution to lose some weight (or worse – *diet*). What's the point? Why feel guilty about feasting with family and friends during the holidays? After all, with a little bit of knowledge, not only can you eat what you want, but you can do it without worrying about putting on extra inches as well.

Here's where the rubber hits the road regarding the holidays – if you really look at how many days you'll spend throwing nutrition to the wind, it's only a small handful. Where the trouble comes in is failing to prepare your body for these holiday meals. How do you best prepare your body – you make smart choices during the week and then go have some fun eating at your weekend holiday events.

By using metabolic motivators like exercise and proper nutrition during the majority of your days, you'll gear your body with a metabolic momentum that will carry you through and past any deviations like the holiday mealtimes. (Oh, yeah – that means passing on the sweets at work, by the way). Motivate your metabolism and the momentum will see you through to a healthy holiday season.

Simple Beginnings...

Did you know that Ray Kroc lied about his age so he could join the Red Cross as an ambulance driver in 1917? A 15-year old Ray got sent to training, but WWI was over before he could get shipped to Europe. Since he didn't have a future in the war effort, he went to looking for work and ended up with the Lily Tulip Cup Co. in addition to playing piano for a radio station at night.

Ray met Earl Prince, the inventor of a five-spindle multimixer for milk shakes and obtained exclusive marketing rights from Prince for the product. For the next 17 years, he covered the country selling the mixer.

In his travels, after coming up on the shop of Dick and Mac McDonald, he was amazed by the simple concept of the hamburger restaurant. He thought that if there were McDonald's restaurants all over the nation, he could sell a lot of multimixers. The McDonald brothers didn't have Ray's vision, however.

The McDonald's sold out to Ray, now 52 years of age for \$2.7 million. Fast food may have been around already (White Castle, for example), but Ray Kroc was the one to bring it to the nation. More than 1 billion hamburgers had been sold by 1963, the same year that Ronald McDonald came into existence. And the rest is history...

Thanks for the Kind Words

"Because of Jim's encouragement, I have already reached and surpassed one of my goals and now have confidence that with his guidance I will attain the others."

- Dr. Tom Duffy, M.D.