

Prep School Performance Nutrition News with *Kathleen Searles, MS, RD, LDN*

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Nutritionist. Speaker. Consultant.

Are your students eating enough fiber? A low fiber diet is one of the main factors in constipation, an unglamorous but common health concern for teens. In this newsletter you will find tips for increasing fiber intake and for avoiding constipation.

As I plan my newsletters for 2014 I welcome your input! Please send an e-mail (ksearles@lunchbox-nutritionist.com) with your questions or concerns about feeding teens, nutrition approaches for sports performance, specific nutrients or other related topics. I look forward to hearing from you!

- *Kathleen Searles, MS, RD, CSSD, LDN*

Fiber: It Keeps You Going!

Bowel function isn't at the top of anyone's list of favorite conversation topics, but it is one of the health issues that frequently drives students to the health center.

Constipation is defined as infrequent, hard, painful, or difficult to pass bowel movements. Food choices, especially inadequate intake of dietary fiber, are often contributing factors.

Dietary fiber is the indigestible part of the food we eat. It plays roles in regulating bowel function, cholesterol metabolism, satiety (feeling full) at meals and maintaining healthy bacterial environment in the digestive tract. Fiber is typically found in whole grains, legumes, and fruits and vegetables.

Students can try these dietary interventions to help improve bowel function:

- Establish a regular pattern of meal times
- Eat breakfast daily
- Increase intake of fruits and vegetables
- Make at least ½ of grain choices whole grains
- Add more legumes, beans, and nuts
- Drink ample water and other fluids (especially when increasing fiber intake)
- Try caffeine and/or a warm liquid to stimulate urge

Other helpful approaches include being physically active and establishing a regular time for using the toilet each day.

Many times constipation is temporary and these simple measures will be helpful. It is best to have the student work with the health center or a physician to be sure

Could your food service staff use some in-service training? Would your faculty like to know more about specific nutrition needs for teens? Do your students have questions about what to eat in the dining hall? I offer the following programs that can be customized to your school:

- Prep School Performance Nutrition: Nutritional Needs of Adolescents and Student Athletes
- On Your Own: How to Choose Healthy Meals and Snacks from the Dining Hall
- Beyond the Peanut Free Zone: Common Food Allergies and Intolerances
- Satisfying the Asian Palate in Boarding School

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Tips to help your students eat more fiber

- Keep a bowl of fruit out in the dorm during after class and study hall hours
- Include more vegetables as ingredients in pasta dishes

that any underlying medical causes for constipation have been ruled out.

Fiber Bonanza at the Salad Bar!

- Raw veggies of all types are popular sources of fiber
- offer some composed salads such as coleslaw, pickled beets, marinated tomatoes or carrot and raisin salad
- offer black beans, edamame, garbanzo beans, hummus, lentil salads
- include dried fruit options like raisins or dried cranberries
- include grain based salads such as tabouleh, whole wheat couscous w/veggies and feta, or quinoa salads
- offer nuts and seeds - sunflower seeds, chopped walnuts, peanuts, sliced almonds

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pizza, sandwiches

- offer individual fruits, not just mixed fruit (students like melons, pineapple, mango, berries, but some prefer one at a time)
- Include fruit dessert options (fruit crisps, baked apples, roasted or grilled fruits, shortcakes, trifles, chocolate covered bananas, fruit fondue, turnovers, etc.)
- offer whole grain buns, breads, rolls, bagels, pancakes, waffles at each meal
- be sure some of your cereal selections are high in fiber - raisin bran, bran flakes, shredded wheat, granola



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