

# Fiber May Help Prevent Lipodystrophy

By Theresa Kinsella, MS, RD, CDN

Many HIV+ people are concerned about lipodystrophy. Lipodystrophy refers to the following body changes:

- Lipoatrophy (fat loss especially in the face, arms, legs or buttocks)
- Lipohypertrophy (fat gain especially around the waist or behind the neck)
- High cholesterol and triglycerides (too much fat in the blood)
- Insulin resistance (high blood sugar levels)

The exact causes of lipodystrophy are not known, but it could be due to HIV medications or HIV itself. There are not many treatments available for people who already have lipodystrophy.

But HIV+ people who do not have lipodystrophy may be able to prevent some of the problems listed above by eating a high-fiber diet and leading a healthy lifestyle.

A research study compared the diet of HIV+ men who developed fat around their waist to HIV+ men who did not experience fat gain. The men who did not develop fat:

- Ate significantly more fiber and protein
- Performed more weight-bearing exercise
- Smoked less

Plus, a high fiber-diet and exercise improve cholesterol and blood sugar levels.

Try to eat 20 to 35 grams of fiber each day. To get enough fiber into your diet:

- Eat at least two servings of fruit each day. Choose whole fruit over juice. Add fruit to cereal, oatmeal or yogurt. Carry an apple or banana for a snack.
- Eat a minimum of three servings of vegetables per day. Combine slices of vegetables with bean dip, yogurt dip or low-fat dressing for a snack. Make a large healthy salad and keep it in the refrigerator to have with your meals. Keep frozen vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower and spinach in the freezer to add to your dinner when you don't have the time to buy fresh.

- Choose whole-grain foods such as

oatmeal, whole-wheat bread, brown rice, barley and whole-grain cereals.

- Add garbanzo, kidney and black beans to salads, omelets and whole-wheat pasta. Try bean dips like hummus as spreads for veggie sandwiches on whole-wheat pita.

## Sample Meal Plan:

2000 calories, 45 grams of fiber

### Breakfast

- 3/4 cup Cheerios and 1/2 cup Kashi Good Friends cereal
- 1 cup skim or soymilk
- 1 small orange

### Lunch

- 1 cup lentil or black bean soup
- 12 baby carrots with 1 tablespoon low-fat dressing for dipping
- 1/2 whole-wheat pita with 1 tablespoon hummus
- 1 apple cut into slices with 2 tablespoons natural peanut butter

### Snack

- 1 cup nonfat yogurt mixed with slices of banana

### Dinner

- Salad with 1 cup spinach, 1/4 cup garbanzo beans, 1/2 medium tomato, 1 tablespoon chopped walnuts and 2 tablespoons olive oil based salad dressing
- 3/4 cup whole wheat pasta, 1/2 cup broccoli, 1/2 cup spaghetti sauce, 3 ounces tuna or canned salmon
- 1 cup skim or soymilk

Avoid smoking, get regular exercise and increase your fiber intake. This will definitely make your lifestyle healthier. It may also reduce your risk of developing some of the problems associated with lipodystrophy, especially fat gain and high lipid levels. 

Theresa Kinsella, MS, RD, CDN, is Director of Nutrition for Betances Health Center in Manhattan.

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