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The average diet in Western Countries provides much less than the recommended amount of dietary fiber. New research shows a significant association between increased dietary fiber intake and a reduction in breast cancer risk.

INCREASED FIBER INTAKE ASSOCIATED WITH REDUCED BREAST CANCER RISK

Breast cancer is the most common cancer and the second leading cause of death from cancer in women in the United States. Numerous studies suggest that dietary fiber intake may reduce the risk of breast cancer, but the results have not always been conclusive.

A new meta-analysis published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* indicates that increased fiber intake may significantly reduce the risk of breast cancer.

Ten prospective studies of the effect of fiber on breast cancer risk were analyzed in the study, which included a total of 712,195 women. Fiber intake was estimated from dietary questionnaire responses. A total of 16,848 cases of breast cancer were diagnosed among the study follow-up periods, which ranged from 4.3 to 18 years.

Of the ten studies included in the meta-analysis, eight of them found a lower risk of breast cancer associated with greater fiber intake. Subjects whose intake of fiber was among the highest 20 percent of participants averaged an 11 percent lower risk of the disease compared to those whose intake was among the lowest 20 percent. In addition, the dose-response analysis showed that the risk of breast cancer decreased significantly, by 7% for every 10 gram/day increment of dietary fiber intake.

The researchers propose that fiber intake may provide protection by decreasing circulating estrogen by inhibiting reabsorption of estrogens in the gut and increasing the excretion of estrogens in the feces. Dietary fiber also may play in the control of insulin resistance and insulin-like growth factors, which are known to be risk factors for breast cancer and type 2 diabetes.

This study provides evidence of a significant inverse dose-response association between dietary fiber intake and risk of breast cancer, most common cancer in women. Since average dietary fiber

intake in Western countries is 15 grams/day or less, only about half of the recommended amount, these findings have important public health implications.

Jia-Yi Dong et al. Dietary fiber intake and risk of breast cancer: a meta-analysis of prospective cohort studies. AJCN.