

nutrition notes

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STARCH INHIBITORS

Quick and easy weight loss is the dream of many obese individuals. One of the latest products promoted for easy weight loss is starch inhibitors. Advertisements for these starch inhibitors have appeared in the Emerald throughout Spring quarter, as well as in many other newspapers, magazines, and brochures. What is this substance, does it really work, and is it safe?

All brands of starch inhibitors contain a protein extracted from raw kidney beans, which is supposed to interfere with the breakdown of starch in the digestive system. Dietary starch is a type of carbohydrate and the chief source of calories in grains, beans and starchy vegetables. The large starch complex must be broken down into simple sugars, such as glucose, in order for it to be absorbed and utilized by the body for caloric energy. Starch inhibitors, supposedly, prevent complete digestion of starch, and thus, calories are not absorbed into the body. Or so the theory goes.

There are no human studies to support the notion that starch inhibitors block digestion of starch or reduce caloric intake from food. The only evidence of their effectiveness is provided by people who have an economic interest in selling the product. This fact alone should make any consumer skeptical of these products.

Ironically, if starch blockers do work, serious health problems may result. Imbalances in blood sugar levels can happen, causing fatigue and irritability. Another problem is the stress on the large intestines. If undigested starch enters the large intestine, diarrhea, gas and cramping are likely to occur.

Fingering starch as the culprit for weight gain is a common, and incorrect myth. In fact, unrefined, starchy foods, such as whole grains, beans, and starchy vegetables are the best types of food one can eat to help lose weight. Whole starchy foods contain fiber and only a moderate amount of calories when not eaten in excess. Fats and sugars are the main sources of calories in the diet, and a person wishing to lose weight should avoid fats and sugars and engage in regular physical activity, not take starch inhibitors and continue to be a glutton.

Taking starch inhibitors gets people away from what food really is - the identity of food. Using a pill to (supposedly) block starch calories does not help reorient a person's attitudes towards food, which is the underlying factor in 80% of all weight problems.

eat well

NAVY BEAN & CASHEW SALAD

1 head leafy lettuce or mixed greens	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup marinade
1 cup broccoli or cauliflower pieces	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup Avocado Dressing or
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked navy beans	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup Bleu Cheese Dressing
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup toasted cashew bits	

Steam broccoli or cauliflower until tender and combine with navy beans in marinade. Chill.

Wash and dry lettuce and tear into bite-size pieces. Drain marinade from vegetables and beans and add them to lettuce. Add cashew bits and dressing just before serving.

OIL AND VINEGAR MARINADE

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup oil	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp paprika
slice of onion	dash pepper
3 TBS vinegar	
$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt	Optional:
$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp mustard powder	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp basil

Shake all ingredients together in a jar.
Makes just over $\frac{1}{2}$ cup.

AVOCADO DRESSING

2 TBS oil	dash pepper
1 large avodado	dash chili powder
3 TBS lemon juice	dash garlic powder
$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt	

Mash avodado with fork. Shake all ingredients together in a jar or put everything into a blender and blend very briefly on low speed.
Makes 1 cup.

well read

Take Care Of Yourself: A Consumer's Guide to Medical Care

Donald M. Vickery, M.D.
James F. Fries, M.D.

The book is comprised of flow charts that contain key questions to ask for each common complaint---sprains, colds, sore throat, vaginal discharge, headache, back pain, sunburn, etc.

Yes and no answers lead you through a network of branching logic and end up telling you whether you need to 1) see the doctor now; 2) see the doctor today; 3) make an appointment to see the doctor; or 4) apply home treatment.

There are sections of background information on each problem, including home treatments to be used when indicated.