Diamond in the Roughage

April 1, 2004 By Andrea Rudd

Trust us, you'll like it rough: A recent study found that HIVer men who munch lots of fiber—veggies and fruits, grains and seeds—are more likely to avoid lipo paunches. The unrefined grub can also lower cholesterol, tame the bowel and blood sugar, and protect against heart disease, cancer and diabetes. There are two kinds of fiber—soluble and insoluble. You need both in your diet.

Soluble fiber breaks down into a gel-like material as it passes through the digestive tract, blocking cholesterol and other nasty junk from entering the bloodstream. It's packed into oatmeal and legumes (dried peas and beans), pectin-loaded fruits (apples and berries), and carrots and beets.

Insoluble fiber acts like a colonic broom, cleaning the digestive tract by moving food through the gut, boosting and easing bowel movements. It's found in whole grains and whole-grain products, wheat bran, and the skins and seeds of many fruits and veggies (so eat 'em, don't juice 'em).

Quick Tip: *Fiber supplements like Metamucil (psyllium) or Citrucel (citrus fiber) can mess with bloodstream absorption of your meds, so it's better to get fiber from food. If you have to take the fibrous powders, space them out from your other meds and supplements.*

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