

'Waste' foods have value

It must be fairly obvious, even to the obese, that not everything which goes into the body through the mouth remains within the system.

As previous nutrition articles have pointed out, we eat most things for the chemical residue they leave behind for repair jobs and general refueling.

Perhaps that's why dietary fibre or roughage as it's more commonly known — seldom comes up as a subject of drawing room or even nutritional conversation.

Dietary fibre is food of plant origin that is not broken down by the human digestive system.

Composed mostly of carbohydrates, fibre has been historically linked to digestive regularity and contributes to the desirable texture, or "eating" characteristics, of many foods.

Additional elements of our foods, such as vitamins, minerals, fat, proteins and other carbohydrates, play their roles in meeting our body needs, such as energy growth and that "satisfied" feeling that



anne wanstall

Nutrition

comes after having eaten a meal.

Fibre is considered as undigestible matter which virtually propels needless food residues through the system.

The need for these "waste" products

recently came under discussion when a team of British physicians compared the dietary fibre intake of rural and

urbanized Africans to that of Western man.

Results showed that rural Africans, with large amounts of fibre in their diet, suffered less from digestive problems (constipation, appendicitis, diverticulitis, cancer of the colon) than did the more highly urbanized Western group with low fibre diets.

It is relatively simple to add more fibre to our diets. Fruits and vegetables such as berries, tomatoes, the broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower, carrots and

wheat potatoes are high in fibre.

In addition, the cereal fibres found in whole grain and bran (the high-fibre outer layers of the cereal grain) are most effective. Whole grain breads, such as wheat and rye, bran muffins and bran-containing ready-to-eat cereals are excellent sources.

Wheat bran-based cereals contain from two to seven per cent fibre and can be enjoyed alone, or in combination with the more generally eaten cereals for breakfast.

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