

The Importance Of Fiber, A Hard Pill For Consumers To Swallow

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Recent Mintel research suggests fiber is noticeably absent from the typical American diet.

One in three respondents to a recent survey consider their diet to be healthy, but only one in five report actively looking for and buying products with added health claims.

Based on these results, only a minority of adults are likely to be interested in fiber-enhanced products with digestive claims.

While 30% of consumers say they make it a point to eat naturally fiber-rich foods, studies show most Americans are failing to meet their recommended daily fiber intake.

This may be explained by the 27% of respondents who think food with added fiber usually has an unpleasant taste.

“Many people have negative perceptions about the taste of fiber,” says Molly Heyl-Rushmer, senior health and wellness analyst at Mintel. “The taste deters them from eating a fiber-added product that has numerous health benefits.”

Twenty-five percent of respondents think fiber is only necessary for those who suffer from irregularity or other digestive problems, with men being more likely than women to hold this belief.

Thirty percent of men (compared to 23% of women) also believe supplements are just as effective as fiber-enriched foods.

Despite the fact that research shows that a lack of fiber is linked to various cancers, heart disease and diabetes, 22% of consumers don’t know enough about fiber to know if it is important to their health.

Furthermore, 37% believe they can get enough fiber from regular foods, so supplements and food with added fiber are unnecessary.

“Consumers are more likely to report limiting sugar, fat, sodium, and calorie intake than they are to eat naturally fiber-rich foods,” notes Molly Heyl-Rushmer. “Adults don’t fully understand the link between fiber and health.”

“The way men view fiber is a considerable obstacle for marketers to overcome,” adds Molly Heyl-Rushmer. She believes utilizing “macho” spokesmen in commercial advertising to gently poke fun at these false beliefs, and convince men they’re incorrect could be a successful marketing tool.

Molly further advises marketers to implement money-back guarantees and educational initiatives to dispel negative perceptions, as well as inform the consumer about fiber’s importance in their diet.

Source: Mintel Oxygen Reports

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