

FOOD INTOLERANCE NETWORK FACTSHEET

Psyllium and constipation

This factsheet is intended for people who are already following a diet that is free of additives and low in salicylates, amines and flavour enhancers (failsafe).

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Whole grains - such as bran, wholewheat, wholemeal bread and brown rice - can cause a variety of symptoms in some failsafers, from irritable bowel to behaviour. Parents are usually surprised when their children behave better on white bread. The secret with any fibre supplement is to eat it every day at the same time (or several times a day), starting with very small doses and building up slowly to avoid bloating, flatulence and diarrhoea.

Psyllium is well tolerated by failsafers and is useful as a fibre supplement especially for those on a gluten free or low wholegrain diet and also to prevent constipation.

- Psyllium is recommended by RPA e.g. plain from supermarket cereal or health food sections or plain uncoloured, unflavoured Metamucil from pharmacies.
- Psyllium is considered to be the most effective form of soluble fibre due to its high fibre content in comparison to other grains, e.g: 100 grams of psyllium provides 71 grams of soluble fibre, 100 grams of oat bran contains 5 grams of soluble fibre
- Psyllium is useful to prevent constipation, haemorrhoids and anal fissures
- Studies have shown that psyllium is useful for irritable bowel syndrome, ulcerative colitis, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, reducing blood sugar levels and inducing a feeling of fullness during weightloss diets when taken half an hour before meals.
- Psyllium can be mixed into cereals, yoghurt, soups or stews or stirred into a glass of water and consumed immediately.

WARNINGS

- Psyllium works by absorbing fluid from the bowel to form a kind of gel, so it must be taken with plenty of fluids - the equivalent of a glass (150 ml) of water - with each dose to prevent severe and life-threatening intestinal blockage
- There have been reports of allergies in some factory workers and nurses who are frequently exposed to psyllium
- It is very important to start with small doses and build up slowly, because as with any source of high fibre (such as All-Bran) too much can cause bloating, stomach discomfort and diarrhoea if you are not used to it. Allow 2-3 days for it to take effect.

SUGGESTED DOSES

Adults: 2 metric tsp (5 grams) once or twice a day mixed with a glass of water

Children 8-12 years: 1 metric tsp (2.5 grams) once a day mixed with a glass of water

Children under 8: consult your dietitian

Suggested doses are from Bonvit Psyllium Husks.

More information

More information from <http://www.herbwisdom.com/herb-psyllium-husk.html>

For symptoms of food intolerance, we recommend a trial of the RPAH elimination diet - free of additives, low in salicylates, amines and flavour enhancers, and with optional removal of dairy foods and wheat or gluten, depending on severity of symptoms - preferably supervised by a dietitian. Write to confoodnet@ozemail.com.au for our list of supportive dietitians, and see [Failsafe Eating](#).

www.fedup.com.au

The information given is not intended as medical advice. Always consult with your doctor for underlying illness. Before beginning dietary investigation, consult a dietician with an interest in food intolerance. You can find a supportive dietitian through the Dietitians Association of Australia www.daa.asn.au or write for our list of supportive dietitians (confoodnet@ozemail.com.au)

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