Fiber, GLP-1, and the Gut Health Connection Transcript

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Fiber Maxing Trend and Podcast Intro

fiber maxing essentially is a trend where people are trying to eat more fiber on purpose. So a lot of times people just think about poop, right? Like they think that that's the only reason they wanna eat fiber, but it actually has so much more to that story than that.

It helps to regulate blood sugar, it helps control our appetite, It is so beneficial for the microbiome. so it's all about balance. Fiber does so more than just helps you go to the bathroom.

Your health is shaped by more than symptoms. Through real stories and expert insights, we explore how your genetics, environment, and daily choices affect your wellbeing.

We uncover root causes and share practical tools to help you find the healing you need. Welcome to the Forum Health Integrative Medicine Podcast. everyone on TikTok is suddenly fiber maxing.

But is this actually the gut health hack we've been missing or just another trend that's gone too far? Today we're breaking down what fiber-maxing really is, what it does to your body and whether you should be doing it too.

Welcome back to the Forum Health Integrative Medicine podcast. I am your host Amanda and today I'm joined by Amber Shuey, health coach in Tampa, Florida.

Amber, welcome to podcast, it is so great to have you on today. Thank you, Amanda. I'm looking forward to spending this time together. Me too. Before we jump right in, I'd love for you to introduce yourself to our audience.

Tell us a little bit about yourself. Sure. So I am a functional medicine certified health coach. I work with Dr. Shobha Saxena in the Tampa office. i really enjoy being able to be on patients journeys with them and seeing what kind of optimization they can make to their health.

Absolutely. And I know I've worked with you a lot through our relationship at Forum Health, and you have been such a stable presence for patients when they're on their functional health, functional medicine journey, if you will, And we're going to be having you back on our podcast in a few weeks also to talk about your personal story, which is such A powerful one.

I cannot wait to dive into that with You today or in A week or a Few weeks. Today, we're here to talk about fiber maxing. So fiber is such a critical thing that we talk to our patients about every day, but there's this trend going on on TikTok, fiber-maxing, so Amber, what is fiber Maxing?

Well, like you mentioned, there's a trend and that trend is just where people are just trying to get as much fiber as possible. But really with fiber, we want to do it in a way that benefits the body the most.

What Fiber Does for Health

So that's where health coaching is really does come in handy. Yeah, absolutely. Definitely. There are different types of fiber, which we'll definitely get into.

So fiber maxing essentially is just a trend where people are trying to eat more fiber on purpose. And why would somebody want to, eat, more, fiber? What are the benefits of eating more?

Yeah, great. So a lot of times people just think about poop, right? Like they think that that's the only reason they want to eat fiber, but it actually has so much more to that story than that.

It helps to regulate blood sugar, it helps control our appetite. it is so beneficial for the microbiome. so it's all about balance and we'll Talk more about that as we go along.

Absolutely. And I feel like there's a reason this trend is happening today also. For the most part, and I've seen this historically with my coaching clients as well, is that fiber is lacking in our food.

today as it is. And so right now we see most people getting far, far below the recommended amount of dietary fiber that they need. That can cause some really long-term impacts on overall health and gut health in general.

Right now, what most get per day, I've been finding is around 10 to 15 grams. What is the optimal amount fiber people should be getting per-day? Yeah, that's a great question.

They're saying 25 grams for women and 38 for a man, but really it doesn't, it, that doesn' even tell the whole story. Everybody is different. So that's why with fiber, we like to increase gradually so we can tell what each person's ideal amount is.

Absolutely. And so when you're looking at what the right amount for each person is, before we get into that, let's take a step back. If somebody is chronically not getting enough fiber, what kind of things would they be noticing or experiencing to say, hey, I probably need some more fiber in my diet?

Besides just tracking and being like, oh, only getting 10 grams a day on average. One step anybody can take today, if you're not tracking the amount of fiber you are getting, start tracking to know what your baseline is.

Right now I think a lot of people would be surprised to see that they're getting as much fiber as they should be getting in their diet. But without tracking and being like, I don't get enough fiber daily, what kind of signs or symptoms would patients look out for to be like hey I probably need to add more fiber into my diet?

That's a great question. Basically struggling with weight would be one of the things because it helps to stay satiated. Fiber does some other signs and symptoms other than weight, would it be like we could have bloating, we can have like constant noise wanting to go back and forth to the kitchen when we're really hungry.

I, what I used to notice was. One is constipation, fiber. There's the misconception that like fiber helps you go to the bathroom, which it's not necessarily a misconception.

Fiber does, yes, it helps to go the to bathroom. But that's all fiber is good for. fiber will help regulate your blood sugar. And so what that gonna do, like you said, all that food noise, blood, sugar crashes, dips, whatever is gonna cause you to crave more, or it gonna have like, You're going to have weird mood swings and stuff like that.

So if you're experiencing like energy dips, energy crashes, or cravings where it's just like, you know, I just, need to get a snack constantly. Those are signs that you could use some more fiber in your diet.

It also supports hormones and detox and detox again, because when you poop you eliminate toxins, right? So fiber does so much more than just. helps you go to the bathroom.

It also improves your metabolism, which we'll get into, and it feeds the good of microbes in your gut, right?

Soluble vs Insoluble Fiber

So this isn't just a digestive tool, it's a metabolic regulator. it regulates your metabolism by stabilizing your blood sugar, helping you stay full and reducing those cravings.

Absolutely. So fiber, before we get into more about how to implement more fiber into your diet. I thought it would be important to talk about the different types of fiber that are out there because there's soluble fiber and then there is insoluble.

And I like to position soluable fiber as the metabolic powerhouse. This is the type of that stabilizes your blood sugar can help lower cholesterol, can.

Help you with your feeling full longer. And that's where a lot of metabolic magic happens. And so what are some of the types of soluble fiber, Amber, that you usually recommend to your patients?

Yeah. So for soluable fiber I think of like beans, so lentils and beans would be a good source. Apples, oats, chia seeds. Yeah, chia seeds would be great too.

Chia seeds, flax seeds apples, those are all perfect examples of soluble fiber. Let's talk about something no one really wants to talk, about but everyone should.

Your gut health. If you're dealing with bloating, constipation, irregular digestion, or even blood sugar swings, you might not need another supplement.

You might just need better fiber. That's why we love solu fiber from Inwell Biosciences. This isn't your typical fiber, Solid fiber is a low FODMAP partially hydrolyzed guar gum, which means it's gentle on your gut.

It won't cause gas or bloating and actually helps feed the good bacteria in your microbiome. It supports regular bowel movements, blood sugar balance, gut healing, and microbiome diversity.

And the best part, it dissolves completely. No grit, no taste, not hassle. If your gut's been off, this is one of the simplest places to start. Head to shopformhealth.com to try SaluFiber today.

Your gut will thank you. The other type of fiber that we like to talk about with patients and clients is insoluble fiber. And insolubile fiber is the, what I like to call the movement fiber, so we have the metabolic powerhouse.

That's your soluble, soluable fiber and that's what all of that metabolic love happens. Then you have ins solube fiber which is your movement. This is a type of fiber that doesn't dissolve in water and it adds bulk to your stool.

and it speeds up the gut transit, meaning it's gonna help your gut kind of move things along. And it is important because it may not be a main player for the metabolism or the weight loss, but it really important for gut health in general.

What would you recommend to patients who are looking to get more insoluble fiber into their diet? Well, non-starchy vegetables would be great place to start for that.

Um, and usually people do a little bit better, I would say with the, with insoluble than they tend to with a soluble, especially with all of the like the keto phase, you know, people are focusing on protein, but they're not realizing the benefits that come from that fiber, specially the soluable.

Yeah, absolutely. And inulin is I believe that's a type of. insoluble fiber that we talk a lot about. And inulin is a specialized prebiotic fiber, and that is in things like garlic and onions and asparagus and chicory root.

That inuin is specifically a soluble fermentable fiber. It really helps feed the beneficial gut bacteria in your microbiome, it also helps with it ferments into, which I love this topic, it ferment into short-chain fatty acids, And so this is where the inulin, the gut microbiome, these short chain fatty acids that it creates in your gut, this where we start to get hormone signaling effects.

So fiber is important for all that gut movement. It's great for your metabolism. Its great weight loss and feeling full. it also plays an impact in hormone signalling.

And that I think is widely looked over. Yeah, absolutely. You cited one of your favorite topics is the short chain fatty acids. And I love that too, because, you know, I don't know if you've heard, Amanda, of the garden analogy where, where you plant a garden and if don' water the gardens and fertilize the gardening, what happens?

It gets overcome with weeds. That's the same way with our gut. The good bacteria that love the fiber. And then you have the bad bacteria, that loves all the low fiber garbage kinds of food.

The sugar. Absolutely. But if we're nice to the good guys in there, then they pay us back so much. They lower inflammation, they improve insulin resistance, They signal to our brain that we are full.

Fiber, Gut Microbiome, and GLP-1

It's crazy that these little creatures that live in us can be telling us what to eat. I mean, they actually make us crave. If we're eating those foods, that's why it's really intentional.

We want to add fiber intentionally and have a diverse fiber diet as well. Absolutely, diversity is a big key. You need the soluble, you need to insoluble you, need all the different types and you'll need them in a variety.

And I think too, like I used to talk about fiber a lot for when I was doing weight loss coaching with patients and this was seven, eight, nine years ago.

Well, when I was doing this, and this was before GLP ones hit the market and they were approved for weight loss and things like that. And I used to talk to both integrated and functional medicine providers, I use to talked to patients about this about adding fiber in specifically the inulin and the insoluble fiber for that GLP-1 gut connection.

So your body, as we've discussed in previous episodes, peptides are not something foreign to our body. Peptides or something our our bodies already produces.

When we give ourselves peptide, we are just supplying our own body with more of what our already should be producing at healthy levels. And we see where GLP-1 is produced in the body, one of the areas that it is produce is in a gut as a byproduct of fiber being digested and fermented in your gut.

So your body doesn't just digest fiber, it converts certain fibers into these hormone signals And when you eat fermentable fiber, which is soluble and fiber and inulin, the gut bacteria ferment that and create these short chain fatty acids.

And these is short-chain fatty acid stimulate L-cells in the guts and these L cells release glucogen. Glucagon-like peptide 1, that is your GLP-1. Fiber creates your body's natural GLp1 reserve.

Increase your fiber intake, increase your bodies natural production of GLPs. That's amazing. It is amazing, I love that point. that was what I was thinking when you were saying about the hunger piece because people, not the GLB1s are bad, they're not at all.

They can be so helpful for so many different patients. But like you mentioned, this is something our body already makes, so why not encourage our bodies to make it?

And you know, people might be struggling with this too because they might not have a lot of diversity in their gut microbiome. If you're just starting on a gut health journey, you need to low and you've got a low diversity and your gut, like there's different, we could talk about the gut healthy all day long.

Fiber is going to support the diversity. It's going support feeding all of those good gut micro biomes. So I love that adding fiber to your diet. is one of the easiest ways to increase your body's natural production of GLP-1s.

So when you do consume fiber, you are getting all of these benefits. One of them benefits is your bodies natural protection of its own GLPs. This is the same pathway that is targeted by drugs like, I actually don't know if I should say these.

I shouldn't say. Everybody knows them anyway, Amanda. Everyone knows anyway. So which fiber actually increases GLP-1? The winners are soluble fiber, the fermentable types, and inulin and prebiotic fibers.

Those would be the two types of fibers that increase the body's natural production of GLp-2. You know, another point when you were saying about GLP-1, that's one of the hormones, but it's interesting because our body also has other satiety hormones like PYY and leptin, and it also influences those as well.

Yeah. And lepton resistance is, you know I haven't talked about that in a really long time, so you might have to refresh my memory on this one. Leptin resistance is a really big contributor to, or maybe not a big contributer, but that was something that I used to talk to a lot, too, when we were working on gut health, working at your body's natural production of hormones and how you can feel full and stabilize your weight and things like that.

Tell me a little bit more about fiber and leptin. Well, you know what? I like to use an analogy, and I use this with patients a Our body reminds me of like a little bit of the symphony orchestra.

So if everything, if all the instruments are playing in harmony, then we have balance. And that's what our body is really striving for is basis or balance, so it's just one of them, many different things that come into balance when we give our bodies what it needs.

One of those things is fiber. Yeah, absolutely. Amber, why do people feel less hungry with higher fiber diets? Yeah, great question. And what I think of with that question is GLP-1s.

So we know that there's a lot of talk out there about GLp- 1s, and I know from working with patients that one of the things that they report all the time is less food noise.

Mm-hmm. They slow things down. The food sits in the stomach can make you feel more satiated. So fiber increases this GLP-1 in our body. That would be one of the things and it stabilizes our blood sugar.

When we're not having those constant spikes and drops, then it's going to help us to not feel as hungry. Because every time we have that drop, then of course we're going want to try to fill that.

And then the other portion would be how it influences the microbiome. Yeah, definitely. So when people have higher fiber diets, they feel full longer because it's slowing digestion, it stabilizing blood sugar, and physically it fills the stomach.

Fiber, Hormones, and Estrogen Clearance

And what this is helping with is people are gonna be grazing less and they're gonna have less of those thoughts of like, what else can I eat? Absolutely, yeah.

Awesome. How does fiber impact blood sugar physiologically? Yeah, great question. So what we want with our bloodsugar is to have like waves. But what happens is when we, yep, like a wave.

especially like higher sugar foods, but really if we're eating foods without the fiber, then we tend to have spikes and drops. And then those spikes, it sort of reminds you of like a roller coaster ride whenever we are going real high and really low.

So you want really smooth waves. You don't want these big roller coasters up and down, up, and Yeah, because what happens then is it drives in other hormones.

So then we have insulin, we cortisol, and we dopamine that are all following that pathway. And then that's where we end up with this rebound hunger, with the food noise, the grazing, insulin swings.

So fiber is stabilizing those spikes. You eat the fiber. And let's say you have a meal that has a good amount of fiber, it also has carbohydrates, and has some protein, also it has sugar in it.

Let's see there's fruit or dessert or something. By adding the fibers in, because fiber slows the digestion, all of that blood all that sugar that you're consuming doesn't hit your bloodstream all at once.

So it helps stabilize blood sugar by slowing down the digestion so your body is absorbing your food and your nutrients at a more consistent pace. That's how it helps you feel full longer, is that it's not just all being taken in right away and you're not getting that big sugar spike and dip.

And that's also how helps with weight gain and weight loss, right? Like when you stabilize your blood sugar, when have a spike, and a drop in your mood swings, you have energy crashes, and you're reaching for more sugar because you just had an energy crash.

When you don't have those signals, when you do not have these insane crashes and dips, then you are not reaching more for sugar. You are naturally going to be controlling your appetite and suppressing that.

So it helps flatten those spikes and prevents crashes. So curious, what is the gut microbiome's role here? When we talk about fiber and we talked about how it's feeding our good gut bacteria, What's the guts role in all of this?

Yeah, I love that question, Amanda. To me, the microbiomes is so really interesting. The microbiom or bacteria microbes that live in our gut What's interesting is we actually have more of those than we have DNA.

And that just shows how important they are in our body. I like to sometimes simplify it with patients that we've good guys and bad guys. So the idea is that, we feed the good guy's with fiber rich foods.

The bad guy like the sugar, they like all the lower fiber foods, and so by feeding these bacteria what they want, then we're giving that, they give back to us.

They're given us what they call short chain fatty acids, which help to lower inflammation, improve insulin resistance, signal to our brain when we are full.

So they actually have everything to do with what we're craving. So we want to feed the good ones so that we, and that's funny. I don't know if you've ever noticed that, I'm sure you'd heard this with patients as well, but their tastes change when they start implementing a lot of the real whole foods.

Yeah. The gut microbiome has such a huge impact on Every part, like there's the gut brain connection. There's a gut immune connection, there is the got metabolism connection there, is that gut urinary tract connection?

There is. The gut mood connection everything your gut connects to everything in your body. That will be. a series for us to discuss, right? But yes, I completely agree.

The gut's role in all of this. First off, the gut plays a huge role overall, and you want a healthy gut for overall health. Your gut health is a direct reflection of your health, And so a low-fiber diet means more sugar-loving pro-inflammatory bacteria.

A higher- fiber diet, means, more short-chain fatty acid producing bacteria, like butyrate, and that is a lovely place to be. So you want a high-Fiber Diet to have a healthy, diverse gut.

Perfect. Love that. Next thing. Amber, fiber and hormones, what's the connection here? Yeah, it's so interesting. So when our body makes hormones It needs to use them, but it also needs get rid of them.

Eliminate them so fiber acts like a binder acts, like, a broom to be able to bind these up to get. And what's interesting too, just a little side point, it's not just hormones.

How to Increase Fiber Safely

It also does this with, um, cholesterol and bio metabolic waste, toxins, harmful bacteria. But just circling back to the hormones, like I'll give you, for instance, estrogen.

Estrogen is a big one. So a lot of times people end up what we call estrogen dominant. And when that happens,

then they end with having breast tenderness, weight gain, cycle issues.

Yeah. It's crazy to think that this could be prevented by just adding a little bit more fiber into the diet. Wow. I feel like that's a really big, that an area that I was not aware of.

Estrogen can be reabsorbed through the gut. We were talking about this fiber helps with elimination, right? You poop things out, That's elimination. And we need to eliminate things from our body because we to get rid of the toxins that we bring in.

It's not just about the taxons though, there's internal Things that we need to get rid of, like you said, estrogen clearance. Fiber binds to used estrogen in the gut.

It helps stimulate it through stool and the Gut Microbiome and Hormone Regulation go very hand in hand. Gut bacteria help regulate estrogen metabolism and fiber feeds these beneficial bacteria.

So a healthy gut equals better hormone signaling. Awesome. So Amber, for somebody who might not be getting enough fiber today, how should somebody increase their fiber intake?

Because you want to do this slow and steady, right? You don't want to go from eating virtually no fiber, like five to 10 grams a day, all the way up to 40 grams of fiber a days.

I feel like that is asking for more trouble than it's worth, so when you're helping patients increase their fiber how do you work with them? What do do?

Great question. You know, there is a gastroenterologist that I do, he's put out a couple books that One is called, the doctor's name is Will Bulsiewicz, I can't say his name, but anyway.

The name of his book is fiber fueled. I particularly like the fiber fuel cookbook. But what his recommendation for fiber, and I think it makes sense to me, is to increase your fiber by three grams of fiber per week.

Okay. That seems like a realistic goal. Yeah. Yeah, I think so too. And so just to give you an idea what that looks like with food. So we're talking maybe like flaxseed, a tablespoon.

Flax seed, half a table spoon. Beans, 1 quarter cup. Vegetables, A cup Okay. berries, a third of a cup, just to give you an idea what, what it looks like.

And because, you know, Amanda, You know this, I'm sure too, that not everybody's gut is capable of handling it. There's people with gut issues out there and we have to be cautious in how we do things.

Well, like we were talking about earlier, if you don't have the right gut bacteria to eat all of this. You're not going to feel great. So fiber when your body can digest it can help with gas and bloating and all of these things.

However, if you've been, you know, environment that has been fed a lot of sugar and processed foods and you're just starting on this journey. Going from zero to 60 with fiber can cause more bloating and constipation.

You do want to introduce this. in a way that's right for you, which I think is why it's so great that we have health coaches that can help patients create their own customized plan.

They can get their intake for where they are today with their diet and their lifestyle and symptoms. they get to work on where to be, but they work with somebody on the right steps on how to get them from where are they today to their desired state with the appropriate plan Yeah, absolutely.

Yeah. It just makes me think about, you know, sometimes we'll hear patients say, well, like, salads will make their stomach bloat. You know, they won't be able to handle it.

And that's because there are certain fibers that are harder for your body to digest, but… And those are those leafy greens. Those are the leafie greens, everything in your salad.

That's that insoluble fiber that you're eating. So if you don't have the right cut bacteria, you are so right, Amber. I remember clear as day now when I used to work with coaching clients that like, I, you know, their baseline might've been like two salads a week.

And when they went on their weight loss journeys, they would get really frustrated because they go from a salad once or twice a day to salads for every meal because there were dieting.

I hate the word diet. You shouldn't diet, but you should do a lifestyle shift, right? because a diet is temporary, but if you want true lasting health and weight loss, these are lifestyle adjustments that you have to make, not just diets to get you a temporary solution or to a temporarily goal.

Anyway, that was my side tangent, When people are going from one extreme to another, if you increase your fiber too quickly and you don't have the right gut microbiome, you want to get probiotics on board and things like that to start repopulating your gut health.

But if increase too fast, your going to feel bloating and your'e going not feel comfortable. And when you dont have somebody working alongside you to help educate you on why you might be feeling this way, that's where people like, I give up.

Right? Because I thought I was being healthy and I don't feel as good as I think I should. So I'm going to give up. And then they go back to old patterns and old behaviors because they didn't understand why they were feeling this way.

Absolutely. So there's certain fibers, like there is what we call FODMAPs that can be a little bit harder for some people. And the other thing too is the form of the fiber as well.

Even like those salads that you talked about, if we put them in the blender and we make them pre-digested, then it can a bit easier for your body. Like a smoothie.

absorb. Yeah, exactly. And you know, since you mentioned the smoothie, smoothies are an easy way to get.

Practical Fiber Tips and Closing

Oh, yeah. Overnight oats, too. I just started doing a recipe. Um, and I eat like a half of my container of overnight oats for my breakfast now. It has oats and it has chia seeds and has some berries in it and i can't do the whole thing because That's a lot of fiber for me in the morning.

And I know that now, that's my body, but I have the second half with lunch or after lunch is like a little sweet treat. But there's so many fun and delicious ways to get fiber into your diet that it doesn't have to be hard, But I think that is still important to understand how to do it for where you are today.

I totally agree. Do you have a go-to favorite product if somebody is trying to increase their fiber intake and they kind of want like a no thought solution?

Do have go to recommendation for patients? You know, I guess I would think of the seeds because they're easy and there's so much benefit to them. Like ground flax seed.

Yeah. Is, is sort of nutty tasting. It just sort a blends with anything. You can add it to your salads and your smoothies. it does have a lot of benefits as well.

But then hemp seed, you're adding some protein. Not quite as much fiber as the other seeds are, but it is still a good addition. you know, it's not about one thing, Amanda, as you.

No, It's all about diversity. So really trying to get. you know, people to just get creative. I know I remember myself, I don't know if you were like this before, but years ago I would be like afraid to put anything together, like it's not gonna turn out good.

But I just like to encourage creativity in people when it comes to cooking, because you can throw, yesterday I made a soup, just pretty much threw anything in there that I had and it turned out amazing.

not chicken, the kitchen sink soup is what I call it. Like when I'm like down, like I've got scraps of like vegetables, but they can't like make a full meal or a whole side, throw them in a pot and even just like mix them up and then I'll immersion blend them too.

And yes, I do the Kitchen Sink all the time. One thing that I like and I recommend to coaching clients is our Solubite. fiber from animal biosciences.

I do like it. It's just an easy, no thought type of a thing. it is a low FODMAP and it's partially hydraulicized war gum, which means it, it it gentle on the gut and won't cause things like gas or bloating.

And it does help feed the good gut bacteria in the microbiome. So I like that because an I also like it because it dissolves completely, and it doesn't have any grit, it's a very low hassle, easy start for people.

Sometimes they don't like the my mom's this way. She was like, oh, I don't like overnight oats when you put chia seeds in them because they have that jelly, like jelliness to them and stuff.

So she actually uses solid fiber because it's just no hassle. Doesn't have to think about it. Can just throw it in with like her morning coffee and like blended up really quick.

That's a really good solution for people if they're looking for a, how can I add that three grams a week to get to that 30 to 38 grams of fiber? Great idea.

Yeah, I like that. So Amber, this was such a fantastic conversation. Thank you so much for joining today. Fiber is not just a side nutrient, it's a metabolic regulator.

If you build the right meal, your body responds correctly. So fiber feeds your gut and it controls way, way more than you think. And if this episode was useful, if you learned something, please like, comment and share.

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