

New Foods to Fight Fat

Want to fill up, whittle your waist, and possibly ward off diabetes all at the same time? Listen up: A recent study from the UK found that mice fed high-fat diets gained less weight if their diets were also supplemented with beta-glucan or inulin, two types of fermentable carbohydrates found in foods such as oats, barley, Jerusalem artichokes, mushrooms, asparagus, onions, and bananas.

Fermentable carbohydrates are a type of fiber that's broken down—or fermented—by the bacteria in your colon. "When this fermentation takes place, short chain fatty acids (SCFAs) are formed," says Lona Sandon, RD, assistant professor of clinical nutrition at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. "These seem to produce more of the appetite-controlling hormones that help us feel full." They may also help lower levels of dangerous body fat: Preliminary research on obese women found that higher blood levels of the SCFA acetate were associated with lower levels of visceral fat, the dangerous kind that's packed around your organs and is linked to diabetes, heart disease, and some cancers.



Fermentable carbs ward off belly fat.

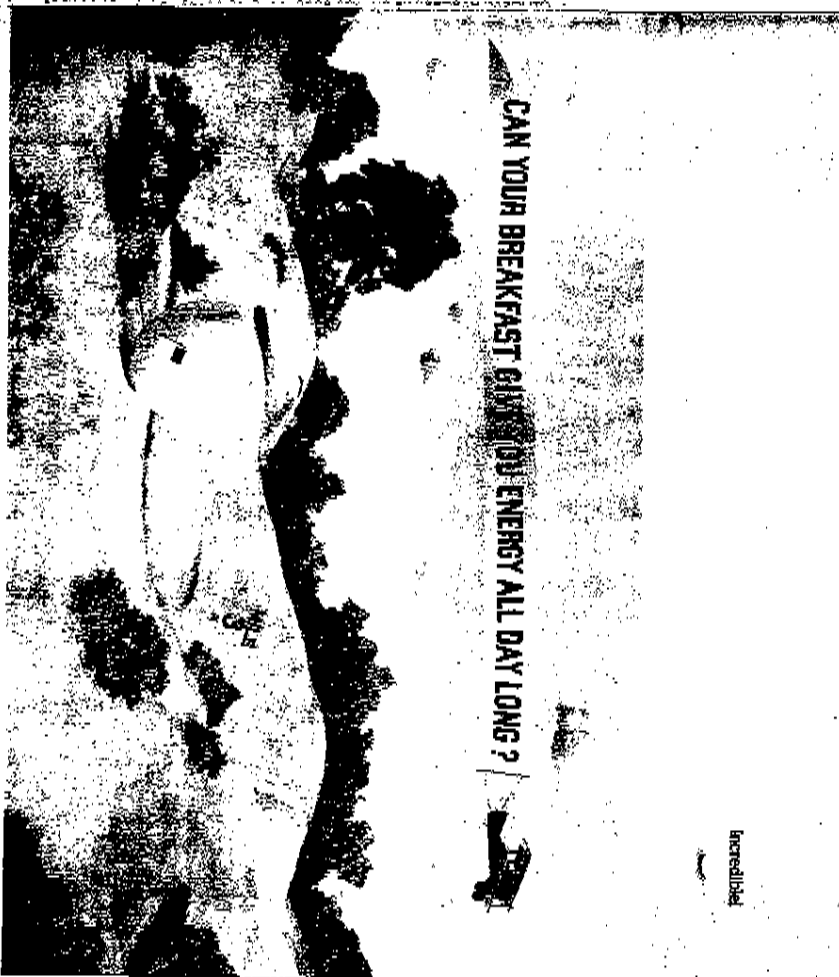
These foods may also play a role in managing or preventing diabetes and maintaining good digestion. "Because fermentable carbs don't start to break down right away, they don't contribute to the big spikes and crashes in blood sugar," says Sandon. "They also act as prebiotics, which feed the healthy probiotic bacteria in the gut and keep things running smoothly."

There's one initial drawback: gas, if you're not used to eating so much fiber. "Increase your consumption of these foods gradually to reduce symptoms," says Sandon. —Stephanie Eckelkamp

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JERUSALEM ARTICHOKES MUSHROOMS ASPARAGUS BANANAS ONION



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*Average amount of cholesterol in one egg: a 185-egg shown from 215 mg. Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, egg facts.