Increased Dietary Fiber May Improve Constipation Conditions With Pelvic Floor Disorder

by Pamela Jones, MA

The pelvic floor includes muscles and ligaments that hold up the pelvic organs. The bladder, uterus, and rectum are supported by this structure. If the pelvic floor is weakened or damaged, these organs can become misplaced, causing problems such as incontinence, organ prolapse, or constipation. The constipation can also contribute to worsening of pelvic floor conditions.

Researchers from the Indiana University Hospital in Indianapolis examined the effect of a high-fiber diet in relieving constipation problems in women with pelvic floor disorders. The study, published in the Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, found that a high-fiber diet was beneficial in relieving constipation and preventing related problems.

About the Study

The study was a small prospective cohort study. The participants, 41 women, with pelvic floor disorder, arrived at a clinic because of constipation. The participants were all instructed to eat a high-fiber cereal. The goal was to gradually increase their fiber intake to 28 grams per day for 42 days. At the end of the study 73% of the participants reported improvements in:

- Abdominal, rectal, and stool symptoms
- Scores in straining and the feeling of incomplete emptying
- Average number of weekly bowel movements
- Frequency of laxative use
- Vaginal and/or perineal splinting

How Does This Affect You?

Constipation is uncomfortable and can also cause more serious problems. Some medications that are designed to relieve the problem can cause other problems. Dietary fiber is well known as a natural solution to decrease constipation. However, if fiber is increased too fast it can cause bloating and gas. Gradually add fiber to your diet. Look for whole-grain products to replace white products and look for cereals with fiber.

Work with your doctor to develop a plan for pelvic floor disorder. Lifestyle changes including dietary changes, weight loss, and special exercises may help prevent future complications.

REFERENCES:


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