

Are your Turds Tapered?



Gold plated “Goldilocks Turds”

Introduction: Two simple rules for healthy living:

What constitutes a “**healthy diet**”? If you read popular diet books you are undoubtedly confused since there is so much disagreement on this subject. Despite all the controversy, there are two simple rules for healthy living in which there is general agreement.

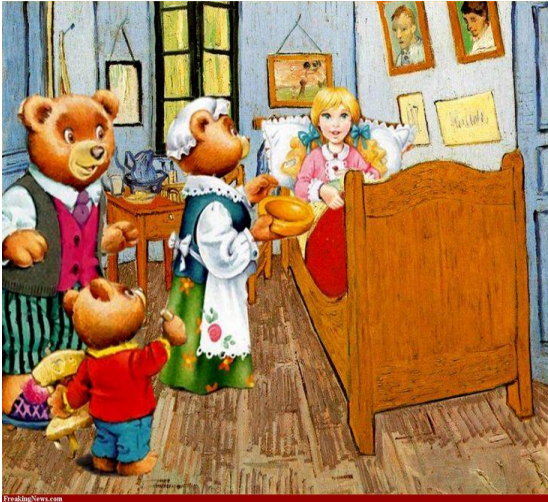
Rule number one: How do you know if you are **adequately hydrated**? The answer is simple; just check the toilet bowl after you pee. If your urine is clear or only slightly yellow, your **hydration status** is excellent. If not, you need to drink more water. Maintaining adequate hydration improves bowel function, promotes weight loss and reduces risk of kidney stones, to name just a few of its health benefits.

Rule number two: How do you know if you have **enough fiber in your diet**? Again the answer is simple. Just check the toilet bowl after you poop. If your BMs are hard and pellet like, you are almost certainly lacking adequate fiber (and water) in your diet. More importantly, this lack of fiber may be an **important indicator** that you are not receiving **critically important micro-nutrients**. This lack of nutrients can have major long-term adverse health consequences.

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In fact, the average American diet is deficient in fiber. This lack of fiber is the major cause of constipation, which is the number one G.I. (gastro-intestinal) complaint that leads to a doctor's visit. In addition, the lack of adequate dietary fiber increases the risk of heart disease, diabetes II and diverticular disease. It may also increase the risk of developing colon and breast cancer.

The Goldilocks Turd:



The question is, "how much fiber do you need in your diet"? The textbook answer is that adult women need approximately 25 grams a day and adult males need 35 grams per day. This sounds simple enough, but how do you calculate grams of fiber in your diet? There is no blood test to measure fiber level and reading labels on food products can be very misleading.

The simplest approach to estimating your fiber intake is to check your poop. Just like the Goldilocks story, the perfect BM is not too hard, not too watery, but "just right." A "Goldilocks Turd" is tapered at both ends, approximately one inch in diameter and brown in color. The process of elimination should take place without straining and cleanup should be quick and simple.

Brief history of dietary fiber:

Over the past few centuries, fiber has gradually been removed from the standard American diet. A brief review of the history of wheat provides insight into how and why most of us lack fiber in our diets.

Approximately 10,000 years ago our ancestors learned to cultivate wheat (and other grains). This remarkable accomplishment led to the establishment of early
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farming communities, which in turn laid the foundation for the evolution of cities. Approximately 8 thousand years ago Egyptians learned how to grind wheat to make bread (essentially made of ground wheat and water).

The grinding of wheat was a job for women. A rolling stone was used to grind the wheat against a stone block. The Egyptians were among the first to convert the whole grained flour produced from the grinding of wheat into breads (and also to make beer, another staple of Egyptian life).

Grinding wheat to make flour was a labor-intensive process, but over time the process was made simpler with the use of animals and waterpower to pull the heavy stones that ground the wheat into flour. This stone-ground flour contained fat from the wheat seed. This fat was the source of a major problem. The fat caused the breads to turn rancid. This process of spoilage was rapid, and whole wheat bread only lasted a day. Thus, the grinding of wheat was a daily task.

The industrial revolution took place in Europe in the early 1800s. During this time period, there was a rapid shift of populations into cities and therefore a corresponding need to feed them. The solution was to industrialize the grinding process to allow for mass production of whole-wheat flour.

Once the process of supply was solved, the next challenge was storage. The ground whole-wheat flour contained fats that would quickly turn rancid making the breads inedible. By extending the timing of the grinding process the problem of short shelf life was solved.

Lengthening of the grinding process produced white flour that had a long shelf life and a pleasing appearance. The extra grinding removed the outer shell of the wheat seed (the Bran) and left only the inner layer (endosperm), which was high in calories (think sugar) and low in nutrition. However, it led to the production of a white bread that had a pleasing appearance and long shelf life.

The story of wheat is similar to the story of other grains such as rice and barley. In addition to the issue of poor nutritional value of processed grains, there is the problem of weight gain and obesity. Fiber slows the absorption of dietary carbs. As a result carbs are rapidly converted to sugar and rapidly absorbed. Sugar (glucose) levels spike and the extra calories are converted to fat stores. Hunger quickly returns and the cycle of overeating is repeated leading to weight gain and obesity.

Next month: more about fiber; how you can get enough in your diet to ensure optimal nutrition and ideal bowel function.

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