



A Look at Lectins

Lectins have received a lot of attention due to media and fad diet books citing lectins as “anti-nutrients” and a cause of obesity, inflammation, and autoimmune disease. Lectins are found in all plants, but raw legumes (beans, lentils, peas, soybeans, peanuts) and whole grains like wheat contain more. The “anti-lectin” theories have fueled the profitable “lectin-free” movement, spawning bestselling books and selling enzyme supplements. However, there is very limited research in humans on the amount of active lectins consumed in the diet and their long-term health effects. Going “lectin-free” is pseudoscience.

Eating foods containing high amounts of active lectins is rare. Why? Lectins are only potent in their raw state, and foods containing them, such as beans and grains, are not typically eaten raw. Cooking or soaking in water for several hours can inactivate most lectins. Lectins are water-soluble and typically found on the outer surface of a food, so exposure to water removes them. No one eats raw beans and rice! Have you ever crunched into a raw soybean? It is hard as rock! All beans and grains are inedible in their raw form. Also, our body can produce enzymes during digestion that degrade some lectins.

Furthermore, not all lectins are toxic. Some lectins can act as antioxidants and can help slow down digestion and the absorption of carbohydrates, which may prevent sharp rises in blood sugar. In many large population studies, lectin-containing foods like legumes, whole grains, and nuts are associated with weight loss, and lower rates of cardiovascular diseases and type 2 diabetes. Thus, the benefits of consuming these foods far outweigh the potential harm of lectins in these foods. Just eat them cooked!

凝集素小常识

由于媒体和流行饮食的书籍将凝集素列为是“抗营养”的物质，并且是引发肥胖、炎症和自体免疫性疾病的原因，凝集素因此而受到了诸多的关注。所有的植物中都含有凝集素，但是生的豆科植物，例如：扁豆、豌豆、大豆、花生，以及小麦等全谷类食物中的含量则更高。“抗凝集素”的理论也推动了赚钱的“去凝集素”产业，因而促进了一些畅销书和酵素（酶）补充剂的销售。然而，对于人类饮食中的活性凝集素摄取量以及其对健康造成的长期影响，这方面的研究却非常有限。“去凝集素”的观点是伪科学。

生活中要吃到含有大量活性凝集素并不容易，因为凝集素只存在于生的植物中；而含有凝集素的食物，例如豆类和谷物，是没有人会生吃的。烹调或是在水中浸泡数小时，可以使大多数的凝集素失去活性。凝集素是水溶性的，通常存在于食物的外层表面，因此浸泡在水中能够除去它们。没有人会生吃豆类和米饭！你有没有吃过生的大豆呢？它像石头一样硬！所有豆类和谷物都无法生吃。并且，身体在消化的过程中会产生能够减退并分解某些凝集素的酶。

此外，并非所有的凝集素都是有毒的。有些凝集素可以发挥抗氧化剂的功效，有助于减缓碳水化合物的消化和吸收，从而防止血糖值的急剧上升。在针对大规模人口的多项研究中，豆科植物、全谷物和坚果等含有凝集素的食物，与体重的减轻、心血管疾病和2-型糖尿病的发病率降低都有关联。因此，摄取这些食物的好处远远大于其中所含的凝集素潜在的危害。只需要煮熟了再食用即可！