

Question 26 – Week of August 11

Constipation of dietary origin can be treated with dietary fiber. Some patients improve with insoluble fiber, whereas others improve with soluble fiber. The mechanism of improving bowel function when fed soluble fiber relates to the following:

- A. Soluble fiber is poorly digested by human enzymes but completely digested by the bacterial flora.
- B. Bacterial flora ferments soluble fiber producing short chain fatty acids.
- C. The size of the stool increases because the bacterial flora increases in numbers.
- D. All of the above
- E. A and B

Answer: D

Soluble fibers are non-starch polysaccharides that are completely fermented by the bacterial flora. The size of the flora increases greatly and thereby produces a softer stool which increases the fecal mass.

References:

1. Stephen A. Constipation in Dietary Fibre, Fibre-Depleted Foods and Disease. Edited by Trowell H, Burkitt D, Heaton K. Academic Press, London 1985, p.133.
2. Scolapio J. Dietary Fiber in Netter's Gastroenterology. Edited by Floch MH. Icon Media. 2005, p. 837.