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The fibremaxing phenomenon: Social media's new healthy eating trend

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Abstract
The increasing influence of social media on dietary behavior has led to the emergence of "fibremaxing," a modern nutrition trend focused on maximizing dietary fibre intake to improve digestive health, metabolic function, satiety, and overall well-being. Popularized on platforms like TikTok and Instagram, fibremaxing promotes the consumption of high-fibre foods, including whole grains, legumes, fruits, vegetables, seeds, and functional dietary products. Scientific evidence increasingly supports the health benefits of adequate dietary fibre intake, particularly in modulating gut microbiota, promoting short-chain fatty acid production, regulating glycaemic response, influencing lipid metabolism, regulating appetite, and preventing chronic disease. High-fibre dietary patterns have been associated with lower risks of obesity, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes mellitus, inflammatory bowel disorders, and metabolic syndrome. However, despite its growing popularity, the fibre-reducing phenomenon also raises concerns regarding misinformation, oversimplified nutrition advice, excessive fibre intake, and the lack of individualized dietary recommendations on social media platforms. This review critically examines the scientific relationship among dietary fibre, gut microbiota, metabolic health, and chronic disease prevention, while exploring the role of social media in shaping modern dietary trends and wellness culture.

Keywords: Fibremaxing, dietary fibre, gut health, high fibre diet, diabetes etc.

1. Introduction

Dietary fibre is an important component of plant-based foods and is widely recognized for its role in maintaining gastrointestinal, metabolic, and overall human health. Dietary fibres are non-digestible carbohydrates that reach the colon where they are fermented by gut microorganisms, producing short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs) such as acetate, propionate, and butyrate, which contribute to intestinal integrity and metabolic homeostasis (Cronin *et al.*, 2021) [2]. Traditionally, dietary fibre was mainly associated with bowel regularity and prevention of constipation. However, recent scientific research has demonstrated its broader significance in regulating gut microbiota, inflammation, glucose metabolism, lipid profile, and chronic disease prevention (Makki *et al.*, 2018; Barber *et al.*, 2020) [1, 9]. Increased consumption of processed and low-fibre foods has been associated with obesity, type 2 diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular diseases, inflammatory bowel disorders, and gut dysbiosis as it lacks dietary fibre (Fu *et al.*, 2022). In recent years, growing public awareness regarding gut health and preventive nutrition has contributed to the emergence of several social media-driven dietary trends. One such trend is "fibremaxing," commonly referred to online as "fibremaxxing," which involves intentionally maximizing dietary fibre intake by consuming fibre-rich foods, supplements, and following gut-health routines. Social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram have played a major role in promoting high-fibre meals, including overnight oats, chia pudding, fruits, vegetables, legumes, and psyllium husk beverages (Vogue, 2025; Marie Claire, 2025) [10, 19]. The trend is widely promoted for improving digestion, satiety, blood glucose regulation, and microbiome health. Although many principles of fibremaxing are scientifically supported, concerns remain about misinformation, excessive fibre intake, and generalized dietary advice circulating on social media. Emerging research indicates that responses to dietary fibre interventions vary

according to gut microbiota composition and metabolic status (Murga-Garrido *et al.*, 2021) [12].

Therefore, this review critically examines the relationships among dietary fibre, gut microbiota, metabolic health, and the growing influence of social media-driven nutrition trends.

2. Understanding Dietary Fibre

Dietary fibre refers to non-digestible carbohydrate components present in plant-based foods that resist digestion in the human small intestine and undergo partial or complete fermentation in the large intestine (Makki *et al.*, 2018). Over the past few decades, dietary fibre has attracted considerable scientific attention due to its significant role in maintaining gastrointestinal, metabolic, and cardiovascular health. Modern dietary patterns characterized by high intake of processed foods and reduced consumption of fruits, vegetables, legumes, and whole grains have contributed to lower fibre intake worldwide, increasing the prevalence of obesity, diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular diseases, and gastrointestinal disorders (Barber *et al.*, 2020; Cronin *et al.*, 2021) [1, 2, 9].

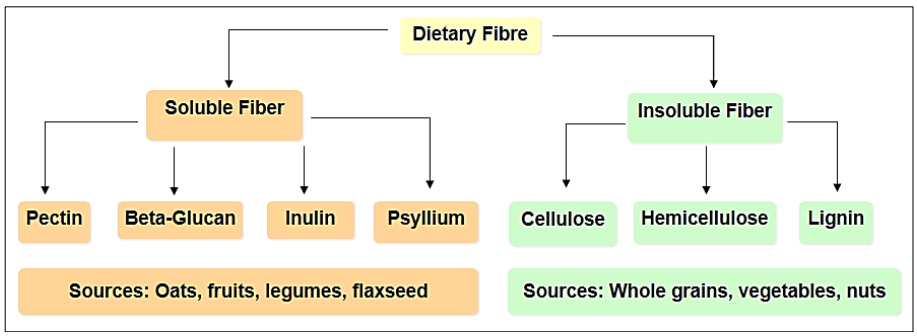

Fig 1: Classification of Dietary Fibre

Dietary fibre is generally classified into soluble and insoluble fibre based on its water solubility and fermentability. Soluble fibres dissolve in water and form gel-like substances within the gastrointestinal tract. Common soluble fibres include pectin, inulin, beta-glucan, and psyllium, which are found in oats, fruits, legumes, flaxseeds, and barley (Fu *et al.*, 2022). These fibres are highly fermentable and serve as substrates for gut microbial metabolism, producing short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs) such as acetate, propionate, and butyrate (Makki *et al.*, 2018). SCFAs contribute to improved glucose metabolism, appetite regulation, and anti-inflammatory effects (Cronin *et al.*, 2021) [2, 9]. Insoluble fibres, including cellulose, lignin, and hemicellulose, do not dissolve in water and primarily function by increasing stool bulk and improving bowel movements. Whole grains, vegetables, nuts, and wheat bran are major sources of insoluble fibre (Barber *et al.*, 2020) [1].

Dietary fibers also serve as microbiota-accessible carbohydrates that selectively stimulate beneficial bacterial populations such as *Bifidobacterium* and *Lactobacillus* species (Sawicki *et al.*, 2017) [15]. These microbial interactions improve intestinal barrier integrity and reduce systemic inflammation. Ojo *et al.* (2021) [13] demonstrated that dietary fiber interventions positively altered gut microbiota composition and inflammatory markers in patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus. Similarly, Ma *et al.* (2021) reported that increased dietary fiber intake was associated with lower chronic inflammation and improved microbial diversity.

Recently, growing awareness regarding the health benefits of dietary fibre has contributed to the popularity of the "fibremaxing" trend on social media. Wellness influencers frequently promote high-fibre foods such as oats, chia seeds, vegetables, fruits, legumes, and psyllium husk to improve digestion and satiety (Vogue, 2025; Marie Claire, 2025) [10, 19]. Although increased fibre intake offers multiple health benefits, excessive consumption without proper hydration or gradual adaptation may result in bloating, flatulence, and gastrointestinal discomfort (Murga-Garrido *et al.*, 2021) [12]. Therefore, balanced, evidence-based dietary approaches remain essential for optimizing the benefits of dietary fibre.

3. The Fibremaxing Phenomenon

The increasing popularity of preventive nutrition and gut health awareness has driven the rapid rise of "fibremaxing," a modern dietary trend focused on maximizing fiber intake through high-fiber foods, supplements, and wellness practices. Commonly referred to online as "fibremaxxing," the trend is largely driven by social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram, where wellness influencers and health creators promote fiber-rich meals for improving digestion, satiety, weight management, and microbiome health. According to Vogue, fibremaxing has become one of the most discussed nutrition trends due to growing public interest in gut health and functional nutrition (Vogue, 2025). Similarly, the trend is seen as a viral wellness movement encouraging individuals to increase consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, chia seeds, flaxseeds, and psyllium husk (Marie Claire, 2025) [10, 19].

4. Role of Social Media in the Fibremaxing Trend

One of the major factors contributing to the popularity of fibremaxing is the growing scientific and public awareness of the relationship between dietary fibre and gut microbiota. Research has demonstrated that dietary fibre act as substrates for microbial fermentation in the colon, leading to the production of short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs) that contribute to improved metabolic and gastrointestinal health (Makki *et al.*, 2018; Cronin *et al.*, 2021) [2, 9]. Consequently, social media users increasingly associate high-fibre diets with improved digestion, reduced bloating, better skin health, enhanced immunity, and weight control. Popular fibre-rich practices include overnight oats, chia pudding, gut-health smoothies, grain bowls, high-fibre cereals, and psyllium husk beverages, which are often presented online as convenient and aesthetically appealing wellness options. Fibremaxing is also strongly linked with appetite regulation and weight management. High-fibre foods have a lower energy density and promote prolonged satiety by slowing

gastric emptying and nutrient absorption (Fu *et al.*, 2022). Wellness influencers often promote fibre-rich meals as sustainable alternatives to restrictive dieting. Scientific studies further support the association between higher dietary fibre intake and reduced obesity risk, improved insulin sensitivity, and better lipid metabolism (Barber *et al.*, 2020) [1]. Social media discussions also emphasize "gut-health routines" that combine fibre-rich foods with hydration practices and probiotics to optimize digestion (Verywell Health, 2025a) [17].

Despite its growing popularity, fibremaxing has also raised concerns regarding misinformation and oversimplified nutrition advice. Social media recommendations often ignore individual variability in gut microbiota composition, digestive tolerance, and metabolic status (Murga-Garrido *et al.*, 2021) [12]. Therefore, although fibremaxing may encourage healthier eating patterns and increased awareness regarding dietary fibre, evidence-based and personalized nutritional guidance remains essential.

5. Dietary Fibre and Gut Microbiota

The human gastrointestinal tract contains trillions of microorganisms collectively known as the gut microbiota, which plays a crucial role in digestion, metabolism, immune regulation, and maintenance of intestinal health (Makki *et al.*, 2018) [9]. Among the various factors influencing gut microbial composition, diet is among the most important modulators, particularly dietary fibre intake (Fu *et al.*, 2022). Dietary fibre resist digestion in the small intestine and reach the colon, where specific microbial populations ferment them. This fermentation process produces metabolites that significantly influence host physiology and metabolic health (Cronin *et al.*, 2021) [2].

Dietary fibre, especially microbiota-accessible carbohydrates such as inulin, resistant starch, pectin, and beta-glucan, serve as substrates for beneficial bacterial populations, including *Bifidobacterium*, *Lactobacillus*, and *Faecalibacterium* species (Sawicki *et al.*, 2017). These microorganisms ferment dietary fibres into short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs), such as acetate, propionate, and butyrate, which are considered key mediators linking dietary fibre intake with improved metabolic health (Makki *et al.*, 2018). Butyrate serves as the primary energy source for colonocytes and contributes to the maintenance of intestinal barrier integrity and anti-inflammatory responses, while acetate and propionate participate in glucose and lipid metabolism and in appetite regulation (Cronin *et al.*, 2021) [2, 9, 15].

6. Mechanism of Dietary Fibre in Gut Health

High-fibre diets have consistently been associated with improved microbial diversity and favorable microbial composition. Ojo *et al.* (2021) [13] demonstrated that dietary fibre interventions significantly increased the abundance of *Bifidobacterium* species and improved inflammatory markers in patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus. Similarly, Ma *et al.* (2021) reported that higher dietary fibre intake was associated with reduced systemic inflammation and improved microbial balance. Conversely, low-fibre western diets have been linked with gut dysbiosis, reduced microbial diversity, increased gut permeability, chronic inflammatory conditions (Barber *et al.*, 2020). Moreover deficiency worsened experimental colitis and promoted inflammatory responses (Shen *et al.* 2021) [1, 16].

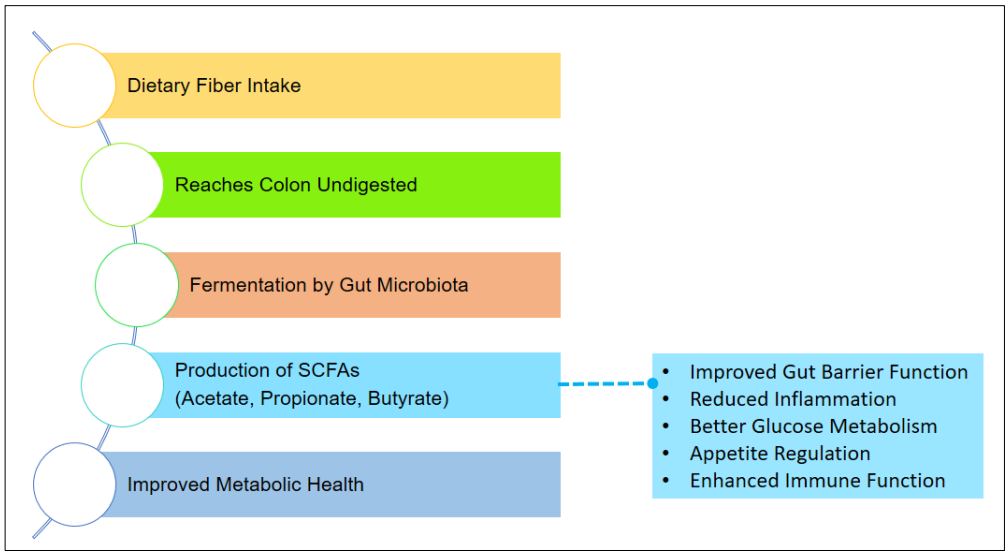

Fig 2: Mechanism and Role of dietary fibre in gut health

Emerging research also highlights that the effects of dietary fiber vary according to individual gut microbiota composition and metabolic status. Murga-Garrido *et al.* (2021) [12] observed that host metabolic responses to dietary fibre varied significantly with microbial variation. Similarly, dietary fibre altered obese and lean microbial communities differently, emphasizing the importance of personalized nutrition approaches (Dell'Olio *et al.* 2024) [3].

The growing scientific understanding of diet-microbiota interactions has strongly contributed to the popularity of fibre on social media. Wellness influencers frequently promote high-fibre foods such as oats, chia seeds, fruits, legumes, and psyllium husk as ways to “feed the gut microbiome" and improve digestion (Vogue, 2025) [19]. Although many of these recommendations align with scientific evidence, social media discussions often oversimplify the complexity of gut microbiota interactions and individual variability. Therefore, evidence-based dietary guidance remains essential for optimizing the relationship between dietary fibre and gut microbiota health.

7. Health Benefits of Fibremaxing

The increasing popularity of fibre is primarily driven by its numerous health benefits. Scientific evidence has consistently demonstrated that dietary fibre contributes to improved digestive health, metabolic regulation, appetite control, cardiovascular function, and the prevention of chronic diseases (Barber *et al.*, 2020) [1]. Many dietary practices promoted under the fibremaxing trend, including increased intake of fruits, vegetables, legumes, oats, seeds, and whole grains, are supported by nutritional research and public health recommendations. One of the most important benefits of dietary fibre is improved gastrointestinal function. Insoluble fibres increase stool bulk and accelerate intestinal transit, thereby reducing constipation and improving bowel regularity (Barber *et al.*, 2020) [1]. Soluble fibres absorb water and form viscous gels within the gastrointestinal tract, improving stool consistency and digestive comfort. Dietary fibres additionally act as substrates for beneficial gut microorganisms, supporting microbial diversity and intestinal homeostasis (Makki *et al.*, 2018). High-fibre diets have been associated with increased abundance of beneficial bacterial genera such as Bifidobacterium and Faecalibacterium, which contribute to improved gut barrier function and reduced intestinal inflammation (Cronin *et al.*, 2021) [2].

The fermentation of dietary fibres by gut microbiota produces short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs), including acetate, propionate, and butyrate, which exert several physiological benefits (Fu *et al.*, 2022). Butyrate serves as an energy source for colonocytes and supports anti-inflammatory responses and intestinal integrity, while acetate and propionate participate in glucose metabolism and appetite regulation (Makki *et al.*, 2018). The dietary fibre interventions improved gut microbiota composition and reduced inflammatory markers in patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus (Ojo *et al.*, 2021) [13] and lower systemic inflammation among individuals with higher dietary fibre intake (Ma *et al.*, 2021) [8]. Fibremaxing is also associated with improved satiety and weight management. High-fibre foods generally possess lower energy density and slow gastric emptying, resulting in prolonged feelings of fullness and reduced caloric intake (Fu *et al.*, 2022). Consequently, social media influencers frequently promote fibre-rich meals as sustainable alternatives to restrictive dieting. Scientific studies have additionally associated higher dietary fibre intake with improved insulin sensitivity, lower cholesterol levels, and reduced obesity risk (Barber *et al.*, 2020) [1, 9].

Table 1: Types, Sources, and Health Functions of Dietary Fibre

Types	Common Sources	Major Physiological Functions
Soluble fibre	Oats, barley, legumes, apples, citrus fruits	Reduces cholesterol, improves glycaemic control, increases satiety
Insoluble fibre	Whole grains, wheat bran, vegetables, nuts	Increases stool bulk and promotes bowel regularity
Resistant starch	Legumes, cooked and cooled potatoes, green bananas	Enhances SCFA production and gut microbiota diversity
Inulin	Chicory root, onion, garlic	Acts as a prebiotic and promotes beneficial bacteria
Psyllium	Psyllium husk	Improves bowel movement and lowers LDL cholesterol

Many viral gut-health routines combine high-fibre foods with probiotics and hydration practices (Verywell Health, 2025a) [17]. Although these practices may encourage healthier dietary habits, balanced intake and evidence-based nutritional guidance remain essential for maximizing the benefits associated with dietary fibre consumption.

8. Risks, Limitations, and Misinformation Associated with Fibremaxing

Although fibremaxing has increased public awareness of dietary fibre and gut health, several concerns remain about excessive fibre consumption, misinformation, and oversimplified nutrition advice promoted on social media platforms. While adequate dietary fibre intake is associated with numerous physiological benefits, abrupt or excessive increases in fibre intake may lead to gastrointestinal discomfort. They may not be suitable for all individuals. Consequently, balanced, evidence-based dietary approaches remain essential for optimizing the health benefits of dietary fibre. One of the most common adverse effects associated with excessive fibre intake is gastrointestinal discomfort, including bloating, flatulence, abdominal cramps, nausea, and altered bowel habits. Highly fermentable fibres increase microbial fermentation in the colon, which may lead to increased gas production and digestive discomfort, particularly in individuals unaccustomed to high-fibre diets (Marie Claire, 2025) [10]. Insufficient hydration during increased fibre consumption may further worsen constipation and gastrointestinal symptoms. Social media influencers frequently promote aggressive "gut-health" routines and rapid increases in fibre intake without adequately discussing gradual dietary adaptation or hydration requirements.

Another major limitation of fibremaxing is the oversimplification of complex nutritional science on digital platforms. Although dietary fibre positively influences gut microbiota and metabolic health, individual responses to fibre interventions vary significantly depending on gut microbial composition, metabolic status, genetics, and overall dietary habits (Murga-Garrido *et al.*, 2021) [12]. Certain gastrointestinal conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome, inflammatory bowel disease, or food intolerances may require personalized dietary modifications rather than unrestricted fibre intake. Dell'Olio *et al.* (2024) [3] also demonstrated that dietary fibres altered obese and lean microbial communities differently, underscoring the importance of individualized nutrition approaches. The quality and source of dietary fibre also influence physiological outcomes. Naturally occurring fibres from fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, nuts, and seeds provide vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and polyphenols in addition to fibre (Mena & Bresciani, 2020) [11]. However, many commercial products associated with the fibremaxing trend rely heavily on processed fibre supplements and fortified snacks that may contain excess sugars or additives. Excessive intake of isolated fibre supplements may additionally interfere with mineral absorption under certain conditions (Barber *et al.*, 2020) [1].

Table 2: Risks, Limitations, and Misinformation Associated with Fibremaxing

Issue	Description	Possible Health Impact
Excessive fibre intake	Sudden increase in dietary fibre without gradual adaptation	Bloating, flatulence, abdominal discomfort
Inadequate hydration	Increased fibre intake without sufficient water consumption	Constipation and digestive discomfort
Oversimplified nutrition advice	Social media promotes generalized dietary recommendations	Misleading dietary practices
Excessive reliance on supplements	Dependence on processed fibre supplements instead of natural foods	Reduced dietary balance and nutrient quality
Lack of personalized nutrition	Individual gut microbiota and metabolic differences are often ignored	Variable health outcomes and poor tolerance
Misinformation on social media	Viral wellness claims may lack scientific evidence	Confusion regarding evidence-based nutrition

Social media misinformation represents another important concern. Viral claims suggesting that dietary fibre alone can "heal the gut," eliminate bloating, or guarantee weight loss are often exaggerated and lack scientific validation. Many viral gut-health routines combine multiple wellness practices without sufficient evidence (Verywell Health (2025a) [17]. Consequently, consumers may struggle to distinguish scientifically supported recommendations from influencer marketing and anecdotal wellness claims. Despite these limitations, many principles underlying fibremaxing remain scientifically valid when practiced appropriately. Increased consumption of naturally fibre-rich foods is strongly associated with improved gut microbiota composition, reduced inflammation, and prevention of chronic disease (Makki *et al.*, 2018; Cronin *et al.*, 2021) [2]. Therefore, evidence-based guidance, gradual dietary adaptation, and personalized nutrition approaches are essential for safely maximizing the benefits associated with dietary fibre intake [9].

9. Future Perspectives and Personalized Nutrition

Recent advances in microbiome science and nutritional research have significantly improved understanding of how dietary fibre influences gut microbiota and metabolic health. Although general dietary guidelines recommend increased fibre intake for overall health, emerging evidence suggests that individual responses to dietary fibre vary considerably depending on gut microbiota composition, genetics, metabolic status, and lifestyle factors (Murga-Garrido *et al.*, 2021). Consequently, future nutrition strategies are increasingly shifting toward personalized nutrition approaches that consider individual biological variability and microbial diversity. The gut microbiota plays a major role in determining how dietary fibres are fermented and how microbial metabolites influence host physiology. Murga-Garrido *et al.* (2021) [12] demonstrated that identical dietary fibre interventions produced different metabolic outcomes among individuals due to variations in microbial composition. This highlights the potential for microbiome-based dietary recommendations tailored to individual metabolic needs. Advances in metagenomics, metabolomics, and bioinformatics are increasingly enabling researchers to understand host-microbe interactions better and identify microbial biomarkers associated with favorable dietary responses (Singh *et al.*, 2024) [7]. Such technologies may contribute to the development of targeted prebiotic and functional food interventions that selectively stimulate beneficial microbial populations. Ranganathan and Anteyi (2022) [14] further emphasized the therapeutic potential of dietary fibre and gut microbiome modulation in the management of chronic kidney disease, suggesting broader applications of personalized fibre-based interventions in chronic disease prevention. Artificial intelligence (AI), wearable technologies, and digital nutrition applications may also influence the future of personalized dietary guidance. AI-driven dietary analysis tools are increasingly capable of monitoring dietary intake, metabolic responses, and lifestyle behaviours in real time. These technologies may eventually support individualized recommendations on fibre type, quantity, and meal timing based on specific health goals and microbiome profiles. Furthermore, the food industry is expected to continue developing fibre-enriched functional foods, beverages, and supplements targeting digestive and metabolic health.

The growing popularity of fibremaxing on social media demonstrates increasing public interest in preventive nutrition and gut microbiome health. However, future public health strategies must prioritize evidence-based science communication to reduce misinformation and oversimplified wellness claims. Additional long-term clinical studies are required to determine optimal fibre intake levels, understand personalized microbial responses, and evaluate the long-term effects of high-fibre dietary patterns across diverse populations (Ghosh *et al.*, 2025) [5].

10. Conclusion

The fibremaxing phenomenon is a modern social media-driven dietary trend focused on increasing dietary fibre intake to improve digestive health, metabolic function, satiety, and overall well-being. Although the trend emerged primarily through digital wellness culture and online health communities, many of its core principles are strongly supported by contemporary scientific evidence. High-fibre diets have also been associated with increased microbial diversity and reduced systemic inflammation, highlighting the importance of dietary fibre in maintaining long-term health. Despite these benefits, the fibremaxing trend also illustrates several challenges associated with modern digital nutrition culture. Future advances in microbiome science, precision nutrition, artificial intelligence, and functional food development may improve the ability to design individualized dietary fibre recommendations tailored to specific microbial and metabolic profiles. Such developments may contribute to more effective nutritional strategies for chronic disease prevention and overall health optimization.

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