



Lectins

Lectins are proteins that bind to carbohydrates. They are found in most organisms, including humans, where they play a role in cell communication, tissue development, and immunity. Plants produce lectins as a defense mechanism (in other words, to protect against being eaten). Plant lectins are usually concentrated in the seed, which is the most precious part of the plant because it holds the potential for new life. The main sources of dietary lectins are beans, legumes, grains, nuts, and seeds.

TO EAT OR NOT TO EAT?

Lectins have received a lot of attention as a compound to minimize. Some people—particularly those with autoimmune responses—may experience digestive issues from consuming high-lectin foods. However, this is not a reason for everyone to eliminate lectin-containing foods from their diet. Lectins are almost completely destroyed when soaked, sprouted, or cooked. When properly-prepared, these plant foods can be valuable sources of vitamins, minerals, fiber, protein, and phytonutrients. In fact, there is preliminary research into using lectins to inhibit cancer growth. While there are bioindividual exceptions, most people do not have to worry about lectins in the context of a properly-prepared, whole food diet.

HIGH-LECTIN FOODS

- raw beans (kidney, mung, pinto, garbanzo, black)
- raw lentils
- raw soybeans
- raw peanuts
- raw whole grains (esp wheat, barley, corn, quinoa, oats)
- raw nightshades (potatoes, eggplant, peppers, tomatoes)
- raw nuts (esp almonds)
- raw seeds



Soaking—such as making overnight oats—is a great way to deactivate lectins.

Some people have a bioindividual need to minimize high-lectin foods to manage inflammation or promote gut healing.