Do starch blockers really block calorie absorption?


- Known for more than 25 years that certain plant foods, e.g., kidney beans & wheat, contain a substance that inhibits activity of salivary and pancreatic amylase.
- More recently, this antiamylase has been purified and marketed for use in weight control under generic name “starch blockers.”
- Although this approach to weight control is highly popular, it has never been shown whether starch-blocker tablets actually reduce absorption of calories from starch.
- Using a one-day calorie-balance technique and a high starch (100 g) meal (spaghetti, tomato sauce, and bread), we measured excretion of fecal calories after $n = 5$ normal subjects in a cross-over trial had taken either placebo or starch-blocker tablets.
- If the starch-blocker tablets had prevented the digestion of starch, fecal calorie excretion should have increased by 400 kcal.
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- However, fecal calorie excretion was same on the 2 test days (mean ± S.E.M., 80 ± 4 as compared with 78 ± 2).

- We conclude that starch blocker tablets do not inhibit the digestion and absorption of starch calories in human beings.

- EFFECT IS MINISCULE (AND ESTIMATE QUITE PRECISE) AND VERY FAR FROM COMPANY’S CLAIM !!!

- A ‘DEFINITIVELY NEGATIVE’ STUDY.