


## Case Image

# Intestinal obstruction caused by consuming diet food containing psyllium

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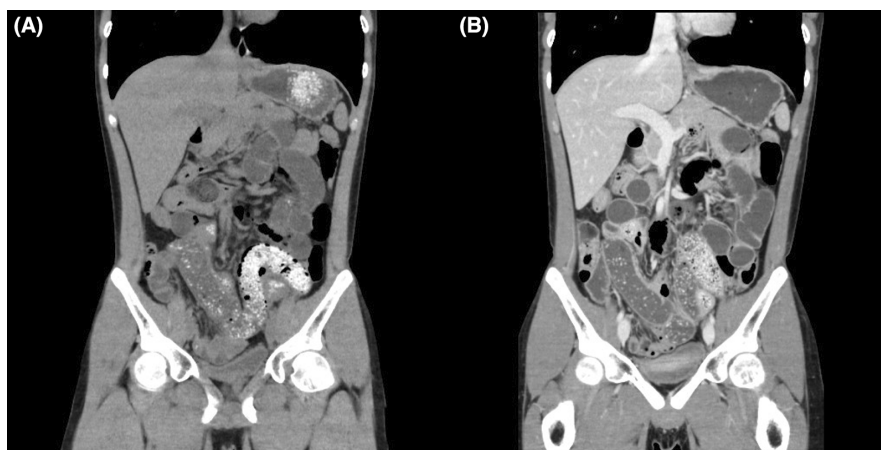
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**Key words:** Dehydrated, diet, food, obstruction, psyllium

## CLINICAL IMAGING

A 26-year-old man presented to our institution with abdominal pain and nausea. Thirty minutes prior to the consult, he ate his diet food. Over the last 6 months, he had been eating food containing psyllium to lose weight. He had no previous history of surgery. Abdominal tenderness was observed on physical examination. His abdominal and pelvic computed tomography (CT) scan are presented in Figure 1. He was diagnosed with intestinal obstruction, and an ileus tube was inserted. His symptoms disappeared after a thick, gel-like fluid was drained.

Psyllium, a laxative, may cause intestinal obstruction if taken without adequate fluid intake.<sup>1</sup> Because of its indigestible and hygroscopic properties, psyllium may expand more than its original size,<sup>1</sup> possibly causing an obstruction. In previous reports of small bowel obstruction due to psyllium, psyllium husk powder was not clearly visualized on CT.<sup>2</sup> However, in our case, it was clearly visible in high density and this finding showed diagnosis of small intestinal obstruction by psyllium definitively. Although the reason is not clear, diet food eaten by this patient may have contained too much psyllium compared to psyllium products in previous reports. Conservative therapy using an ileus tube may



**Fig. 1.** Abdominal computed tomography scans (coronal view) in the emergency department. The scan shows a granular dosage form in the bowel due to the presence of psyllium powder: (A) plain view; (B) contrast-enhanced view.

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relieve the obstruction, although some cases require surgery.<sup>1</sup> CT finding is significant for the determination of treatment. Psyllium is a diet food that is easily accessible. However, because patients undergoing extreme slimming regimens may become dehydrated, caution should be exercised when eating psyllium.

## DISCLOSURE

**A**PPROVAL OF THE Research Protocol with Approval No. and Committee Name: N/A.

Informed Consent: Written informed consent was obtained from the patient to publish this case report and its accompanying image.

Registry and the Registration No. of the Study/Trial: N/A.

Animal Studies: N/A.

Conflict of Interest: None declared.

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- 2 Chen YA, Cervini P, Kirpalani A, Vlachou PA, Grover SC, Colak E. Small bowel obstruction following computed tomography and magnetic resonance enterography using psyllium seed husk as an oral contrast agent. *Can. J. Gastroenterol. Hepatol.* 2014; 28: 391–5.