Rice cake ileus

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A 68-year-old man admitted for abdominal pain and vomiting. Plain X-ray examination of the abdomen showed dilation of the small intestine [Figure 1]. He was diagnosed with obstruction of the small intestine was found in abdominal computed tomography (CT) on admission to have high-density “tumors” in small intestine [Figure 2, arrowhead]. The patient gave a history of eating rice cakes previous day. We made the diagnosis the ileus of small intestinal obstruction caused by rice cakes, and the patient was observed under fasting and intravenous fluid administration. His symptoms improved next day and he was discharged from the hospital on the fourth day after admission. Rice cakes, a traditional food in Japan, consist of starch without amylose and appear as high density area on CT. It is thought that ileus can easily occur within insufficient chewing. A careful meal history and CT are useful for making the diagnosis.

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