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Instant noodles carry health risks for women: study

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Women who eat instant noodles, like Ramen, at least two times a week face a greater risk of high blood pressure, elevated blood sugar and high cholesterol, US researchers said Thursday.

The study looked at data from 10,711 adults—just over half of whom were women—in the Korean National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey.

Researchers at Harvard University found that there was a 68 percent higher risk of metabolic syndrome among women, but not men, who ate instant noodles more than twice per week.

Metabolic syndrome is a group of conditions that raise the risk of heart disease and diabetes. It includes carrying too much fat around the waist.

"The consumption of instant noodles was associated with increased prevalence of metabolic syndrome in women, independent of major dietary patterns," said the study in the *Journal of Nutrition*.

In other words, it didn't matter if women ate a largely traditional diet of rice, fish and vegetables, or a diet heavier in meat and fried foods—if they ate instant noodles twice weekly, they were at higher risk of health problems.

It was unclear why the effect was seen in women but not men.

Since the data was based on surveys, researcher Frank Hu, a professor of nutrition and epidemiology at Harvard, said it may be that women reported their diet more accurately than men, or that women were more sensitive to the effects of carbohydrates, fat and salts.

So how much is too much when it comes to instant noodles?

"Once or twice a month is not a problem," Hu was quoted as telling The New York Times.

"But a few times a week really is."

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