

Eating Whole-Grain Breakfast Cereals May Be Associated With a Lower Risk of Heart Failure for Men

October 23 2007

Men who consume a higher amount of whole grain breakfast cereals may have a reduced risk of heart failure, according to a report by Harvard researchers published in the October 22 issue of *Archives of Internal Medicine*.

"The lifetime risk of heart failure is estimated at 20 percent (one in five) for both men and women aged 40 years," according to background information in the article. Studies have suggested that the risk of hypertension, coronary heart disease, hypercholesterolemia (high blood cholesterol) and mortality can be reduced with a diet rich in grain products.

Luc Djoussé, M.D., M.P.H., D.Sc. and Michael Gaziano, M.D., M.P.H. of the Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH) and and Harvard Medical School, Boston, analyzed the association between breakfast cereal intake and new cases of heart failure among 21,376 men (average age 53.7) participating in the Physician's Health Study I. Cereal intake was estimated by using a food frequency questionnaire and incident heart failure was assessed by annual follow-up questionnaires for an average of 19.6 years.

During follow-up, 1,018 of the participants experienced heart failure. This included 362 of 6,995 participants who did not eat any cereal, 237 of 4,987 of those who ate one serving or less per week, 230 of 5,227 of

those who ate two to six servings per week and 189 of 4,167 of those who ate seven or more servings per week.

"Our data demonstrate that a higher intake of whole grain breakfast cereals is associated with a lower risk of heart failure," the authors conclude. This association may be due to the beneficial effects of whole grains on heart failure risk factors such as hypertension, heart attack, diabetes, and obesity.

"If confirmed in other studies, a higher intake of whole grains along with other preventive measures could help lower the risk of heart failure," the authors write.

Source: Harvard University

Citation: Eating Whole-Grain Breakfast Cereals May Be Associated With a Lower Risk of Heart Failure for Men (2007, October 23) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2007-10-whole-grain-breakfast-cereals-heart-failure.html>

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