

Oatmeal's health claims strongly reaffirmed, science shows

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A new scientific review of the most current research shows the link between eating oatmeal and cholesterol reduction to be stronger than when the FDA initially approved the health claim's appearance on food labels in 1997.

Dr. James W. Anderson, professor of medicine and clinical nutrition at the University of Kentucky College of Medicine, co-authors "The Oatmeal-Cholesterol Connection: 10 Years Later" in the January/February 2008 issue of the *American Journal of Lifestyle Medicine*.

Anderson presents a contemporary analysis to determine if newer studies are consistent with the original conclusion reached by the FDA. His report says studies conducted during the past 15 years have, without exception, shown:

- total cholesterol levels are lowered through oat consumption;
- low-density lipoprotein (LDL, the "bad" cholesterol) is reduced without adverse effects on high-density lipoprotein cholesterol (HDL, the "good" cholesterol), or triglyceride concentrations.

"Whole-grain products like oatmeal are among some of the best foods one can eat to improve cholesterol levels, in addition to other lifestyle choices," Anderson said. "Lifestyle choices, such as diet, should be the first line of therapy for most patients with moderate cholesterol risk given the expense, safety concerns, and intolerance related to cholesterol

lowering drugs.”

More recent data indicate that whole-grain oats, as part of a lifestyle management program, may confer health benefits that extend beyond total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol reduction, Anderson said.

Recent studies suggest eating oatmeal may:

- Reduce the risk for elevated blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes, and weight gain
- Reduce LDL cholesterol during weight-loss
- Provide favorable changes in the physical characteristics of LDL cholesterol particles, making them less susceptible to oxidation (oxidation is thought to lead to hardening of the arteries.)
- Supply unique compounds that may lead to reducing early hardening of the arteries

“Since the 80’s, oatmeal has been scientifically recognized for its heart health benefits, and the latest research shows this evidence endures the test of time and should be embraced as a lifestyle option for the millions of Americans at-risk for heart disease,” said Anderson.

Source: University of Kentucky

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