Eating whole grains lowers heart failure risk, according to new study

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About 5 million people in the United States suffer from heart failure (HF). While some reports indicate that changes to diet can reduce HF risk, few large, prospective studies have been conducted. In a new study researchers observed over 14,000 participants for more than 13 years and found that whole grain consumption lowered HF risk, while egg and high-fat dairy consumption raised risk. Other food groups did not directly affect HF risk. The results are published in the November 2008 issue of the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*.

Diet is among the prominent lifestyle factors that influence major HF risk factors: coronary artery disease, obesity, diabetes and insulin resistance and hypertension. Using data from the Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities (ARIC) study, researchers from the Division of Epidemiology and Community Health, University of Minnesota and the Department of Epidemiology and Cardiovascular Diseases Program, University of North Carolina, analyzed the results of baseline exams of more than 14,000 White and African American adults conducted in 1987-89, with follow-up exams completed during 1990-92, 1993-95, and 1996-98. Four field centers participated in the study: Forsyth County, NC; Jackson, MS; northwest Minneapolis suburbs, MN; and Washington County, MD. The study also collected demographic characteristics and lifestyle factors, as well as other medical conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and hypertension.

Writing in the article, Jennifer A. Nettleton, Ph.D., states, "Although risk estimates were modest (7% lower risk per 1-serving increase in
whole grain intake; 8% greater risk per 1-serving increase in high-fat
dairy intake; 23% greater risk per 1-serving increase in egg intake), the
totality of literature in this area suggests it would be prudent to
recommend that those at high risk of HF increase their intake of whole
grains and reduce intake of high-fat dairy and eggs, along with following
other healthful dietary practices consistent with those recommended by
the American Heart Association."

Citation: The article is "Incident heart failure is associated with lower
whole grain intake and greater high-fat dairy and egg intake in the
Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities (ARIC) study" by Jennifer A.
Nettleton, Ph.D.; Lyn M. Steffen, Ph.D.; Laura R. Loehr, MD; Wayne
D. Rosamond, Ph.D; and Aaron R. Folsom, MD. It appears in the
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