

# New research reinforces anti-inflammatory properties of tart cherries

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There's more evidence of tart cherries' powerful anti-inflammatory benefits, according to a new study presented by a team of Michigan researchers today at the Experimental Biology annual meeting. Using a "whole food" approach, researchers found that a cherry-enriched diet not only reduced overall body inflammation, but also reduced inflammation at key sites (belly fat, heart) known to affect heart disease risk in obese, at-risk rats.

At-risk obese rats were fed a cherry-enriched "[Western Diet](#)," characterized by high fat and moderate [carbohydrate](#) - in line with the typical American diet - for 90 days. Cherry-enriched diets, which consisted of whole tart cherry powder as 1 percent of the diet, reduced risk factors for [heart disease](#) including cholesterol, body weight, fat mass and known markers of inflammation. While inflammation is a normal process the body uses to fight off infection or injury, according to recent science, a chronic state of inflammation increases the risk for diseases.

"[Chronic inflammation](#) is a whole body condition that can affect overall health, especially when it comes to the heart," said study co-author Mitch Seymour, PhD, at the University of Michigan. "This study offers further promise that foods rich in antioxidants, such as cherries, could potentially reduce inflammation and have the potential to lower disease risk."

A second pilot study found similar results in humans. Ten overweight or obese adults drank eight ounces of tart cherry juice daily for four weeks.

At the end of the trial, there were significant reductions in several markers of inflammation, in addition to lower levels of [triglycerides](#), another key risk factors for heart disease.

Researchers say both studies are encouraging and will lead to further clinical studies in humans to explore the link between diet, inflammation and lowering disease risk.

## The Power of Eating Red

This new study is the latest linking cherries to protection against heart disease and inflammation. Researchers believe it's the anthocyanins - powerful antioxidant compounds in cherries - also responsible for the fruit's bright red color, that link cherries to reduced inflammation, even inflammation related to muscle recovery post-exercise.

Since cherries are available year-round in dried, frozen and juice forms, it's easy and delicious to incorporate them into the daily [diet](#) to help manage inflammation, from topping dried cherries in oatmeal to enjoying a post-exercise smoothie of cherry juice and lowfat yogurt.

### More information:

Seymour EM, Urcuyo-Llanes D, Bolling SF, Bennink MR. Tart cherry intake reduces plasma and tissue inflammation in obesity-prone rats. FASEB Journal. 2010; 24:335.1.

Martin KR, Burrell L. 100% tart cherry juice reduces pro-inflammatory biomarkers in overweight and obese subjects. FASEB Journal. 2010; 24:724.15.

Martin KR, Bopp J, Neupane S, Vega-Lopez. 100% tart cherry juice reduces plasma triglycerides and CVD risk in overweight and obese subjects. FASEB Journal. 2010; 24:722.14.

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