

'Apple a day' advice rooted in science

April 12 2011

Everyone has heard the old adage, "an apple a day keeps the doctor away." We all know we should eat more fruit. But why apples? Do they contain specific benefits?

According to Dr. Bahram H. Arjmandi, PhD, RD, Margaret A. Sitton Professor and Chair, Department of Nutrition, Food and Exercise Sciences at The Florida State University, apples are truly a "miracle fruit" that convey benefits beyond fiber content. Animal studies have shown that apple pectin and polyphenols in apple improve [lipid metabolism](#) and lower the production of pro-inflammatory molecules. Arjmandi's most recent research is the first to evaluate the long-term cardioprotective effects of daily consumption of apple in [postmenopausal women](#). The results of this USDA-funded study will be presented at Experimental Biology 2011 on Tuesday, April 12, at 12:45 pm in Washington, DC.

This study randomly assigned 160 women ages 45-65 to one of two dietary intervention groups: one received dried apples daily (75g/day for 1 year) and the other group ate dried prunes every day for a year. Blood samples were taken at 3, 6 and 12-months. The results surprised Dr. Arjmandi, who stated that "incredible changes in the apple-eating women happened by 6 months- they experienced a 23% decrease in LDL cholesterol," which is known as the "bad cholesterol." The daily apple consumption also led to a lowering of lipid hydroperoxide levels and C-reactive protein in those women.

"I never expected apple consumption to reduce [bad cholesterol](#) to this

extent while increasing HDL cholesterol or [good cholesterol](#) by about 4%," Arjmandi said. Yet another advantage is that the extra 240 calories per day consumed from the dried apple did not lead to weight gain in the women; in fact, they lost on average 3.3 lbs. "Reducing body weight is an added benefit to daily apple intake" he said. Part of the reason for the weight loss could be the fruit's pectin, which is known to have a satiety effect. The next step in confirming the results of this study is a multi-investigator nationwide study.

There is frequently some truth behind our common expressions, and in the case of 'an [apple](#) a day,' Dr. Arjmandi has shown that nutrition science backs up the expression. "Everyone can benefit from consuming apples," he said.

Provided by Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology

Citation: 'Apple a day' advice rooted in science (2011, April 12) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-04-apple-day-advice-rooted-science.html>

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