

Diet high in vegetables and fruit associated with less weight gain in African-American women

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Investigators from the Slone Epidemiology Center at Boston University have reported that African American women who consumed a diet high in vegetables and fruit gained less weight over a 14-year period than those who consumed a diet high in red meat and fried foods. This is the first prospective study to show that a healthier diet is associated with less weight gain in African American women, a population with a high prevalence of obesity. The study results, published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, were based on data from the Black Women's Health Study (BWHS), a large follow-up study of 59,000 African American women from across the U.S. conducted since 1995.

The study asked participants about their diet at the beginning of the study in 1995, and again six years later in 2001. Two major [dietary patterns](#) were identified: 1) a "vegetables/fruit" pattern high in vegetables, fruit, legumes, fish and [whole grains](#); and 2) a "meat/[fried foods](#)" pattern high in red meat, processed meat, french fries and fried chicken.

The researchers found that women who consumed a diet high in vegetables and fruit gained less weight over 14 years than women whose diets were low in these foods. Women who consumed a diet high in meat and fried foods gained more weight than women with low intake of these foods. These associations were strongest for women whose dietary patterns did not change during the study period. The associations also

were stronger among women younger than 35 years, who gained the most weight (29 pounds during the 14-year study period, on average).

According to the lead author and researcher Dr. Deborah Boggs, people tend to eat a consistent amount of food rather than a consistent number of calories. "A diet high in red meat and fried foods can lead to consuming too many calories because these foods contain more calories than the same amount of vegetables and fruit," she explained.

The authors concluded that the findings suggest that replacing red meat and fried foods with vegetables and fruit could help to lower obesity rates.

Provided by Boston University Medical Center

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