

A 'nutty' solution to type 2 diabetes management

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Eating nuts every day could help control Type 2 diabetes and prevent its complications, according to new research from St. Michael's Hospital and the University of Toronto.

In the research, published online by the journal [Diabetes Care](#), a team of researchers led by Dr. David Jenkins (University of Toronto Department of Nutritional Sciences; St. Michael's Hospital Risk Factor Modification Centre) reports that consuming two ounces of nuts daily as a replacement for carbohydrates proved effective at glycemic and serum lipid control for people with Type 2 diabetes.

"Mixed, unsalted, raw, or dry-roasted nuts have benefits for both blood glucose control and [blood lipids](#) and may be used as part of a strategy to improve [diabetes control](#) without weight gain," said Dr. Jenkins, who also has appointments with St. Michael's Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism and the U of T's Department of Medicine. He also serves as Canada Research Chair in [Nutrition and Metabolism](#).

Jenkins and his colleagues provided three different diet supplements to subjects with Type 2 diabetes. One group was given muffins, one was provided with a mixture of nuts including raw almonds, pistachios, walnuts, pecans, hazelnuts, peanuts, cashews, and macadamias, and one group was given a mixture of muffins and nuts.

Subjects receiving the nut-only supplement reported the greatest improvement in blood glucose control using the glycosylated hemoglobin

(HbA1c) test. The nut diet subjects also experienced a reduction in [low-density lipoprotein](#) cholesterol (known as LDL, or "[bad cholesterol](#)"). The subjects provided the muffin supplement or mixed muffin-and-nut supplement experienced no significant improvement in glycemic control but those receiving the muffin-nut mixture also significantly lowered their serum LDL levels.

"Those receiving the full dose of nuts reduced their HbA1c [the long-term marker of glycemic control] by two-thirds of what the U.S. [Food and Drug Administration](#) recognizes as being clinically meaningful for therapeutic agents. Furthermore, neither in the current study nor in previous reports has nut consumption been associated with weight gain. If anything, nuts appear to be well suited as part of weight-reducing diets," Dr. Jenkins said.

"The study indicates that nuts can provide a specific food option for people with Type 2 diabetes wishing to reduce their carbohydrate intake."

More information: The article, entitled "Nuts as a Replacement for Carbohydrates in the Diabetic Diet," is available here: <http://care.diabetesjournals.org/content/early/2011/06/02/dc11-0338.abstract>

Provided by St. Michael's Hospital

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