

Strawberries activate protection protein to prevent cardiovascular disease

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Strawberries, the traditional summer treat associated with Wimbledon could be serving up some unexpected health benefits.

Scientists at the University of Warwick have been studying the beneficial effects of strawberries on our [cardiovascular health](#), particularly around how they prevent the development of heart disease and diabetes.

Professor Paul Thornalley from Warwick Medical School heads the team that discovered extracts from strawberries positively activate a protein in our bodies called 'Nrf2' which is shown to increase antioxidant and other protective activities. This protein works to decrease [blood lipids](#) and cholesterol, the very things which can lead to cardiovascular problems.

Eating strawberries has previously been found to counter post-meal [blood glucose](#) and [low density lipoprotein](#), or 'bad' cholesterol and therefore decrease risk of diabetes and heart disease, but this is the first time that strawberry extracts have been proved to actively stimulate proteins that offer us protection against disease.

Professor Thornalley explained:

"We've discovered the science behind how strawberries work to increase our in-built defences to keep cells, organs and blood vessels healthy and which can reduce the risk of developing [cardiovascular problems](#) such as

heart disease and diabetes. So don't feel guilty about serving up strawberries and cream ... although I'd suggest more strawberries and less or even no cream!"

Screening and mathematical modelling techniques developed at the University of Warwick can now take this research further to help identify the best varieties of strawberries, how they are served or processed and how many strawberries should be eaten for optimum health benefit.

Provided by University of Warwick

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