

Research show almonds reduce risk of heart disease

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(Medical Xpress)—Scientists have found that eating almonds in your diet can reduce the risk of heart disease by keeping blood vessels healthy.

Research found that they significantly increase the amount of antioxidants in the [blood stream](#), reduce blood pressure and improve

[blood flow](#). These findings add weight to the theory that Mediterranean diets with lots of nuts have big health benefits.

The study was led by Professor Helen Griffiths, Professor in Biomedical Sciences and Executive Dean of the School of Life and Health Sciences at Aston University in Birmingham, UK. Researchers tested the effects of a short-term almond-enriched diet on healthy young and middle-aged men as well as on a group of young men with [cardiovascular risk factors](#) including having [high blood pressure](#) or being overweight. A control group ate what they normally would, while another group consumed snacks of 50g of almonds a day for one month.

At the end of the study period, the group eating an almond-enriched diet had higher levels of antioxidants (alpha-tocopherol) in their blood stream, improved blood flow and lower [blood pressure](#), potentially reducing their risk of [heart disease](#).

Almonds are known to contain a range of beneficial substances such as vitamin E and healthy fats, fibre which increases the sense of fullness, and flavonoids which may have antioxidant properties. The team believes it is likely to be the combination of all these nutrients working together to create the overall health benefits rather than just one particular nutrient in isolation.

Professor Griffiths said: "Our study confirms that almonds are a superfood. Previous studies have shown that they keep your heart healthy, but our research proves that it isn't too late to introduce them into your diet - adding even a handful (around 50g) every day for a short period can help. You could replace a daytime snack with a bag of almonds or add them to your regular meals like porridge or muesli to help reduce your risk of heart problems."

More information: The full article, published in peer-reviewed

journal Free Radical Research, is available online:

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Provided by Aston University

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