

# New study finds plant protein, fiber, nuts lower cholesterol, improve blood pressure

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A new meta-analysis published in the journal *Progress in Cardiovascular Diseases* finds that a diet that includes plant protein, fiber, nuts, and plant sterols lowers cholesterol, improves blood pressure, and improves other markers for cardiovascular disease risk.

The diet is based on the "Portfolio Diet," which is a plant-based dietary pattern that emphasizes a portfolio of four proven cholesterol-lowering foods:

- 42 grams of nuts (tree nuts or peanuts) per day
- 50 grams of [plant protein](#) per day from soy products or dietary pulses (beans, peas, chickpeas, or lentils) per day
- 20 grams of viscous soluble fiber per day from oats, barley, psyllium, eggplant, okra, apples, oranges, or berries
- 2 grams of [plant sterols](#) per day from supplements or plant-sterol enriched products

The meta-analysis found that following the dietary pattern reduced LDL-cholesterol by 17 percent, while also reducing total cholesterol, triglycerides, systolic blood pressure, diastolic [blood pressure](#), and C-reactive protein. It also helped reduce 10-year coronary heart disease risk by 13 percent.

"Previous clinical trials and observational studies have found strong evidence that a plant-based diet can improve heart health," says study author Hana Kahleova, M.D., Ph.D., director of clinical research for the

Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine. "This study demonstrates that certain plant foods are especially effective for lowering cholesterol and boosting our overall cardiovascular health."

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, responsible for 1 in every 4 deaths.

**More information:** Laura Chiavaroli et al, Portfolio Dietary Pattern and Cardiovascular Disease: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Controlled Trials, *Progress in Cardiovascular Diseases* (2018). [DOI: 10.1016/j.pcad.2018.05.004](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pcad.2018.05.004)

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