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New Study Finds No Relationship Between High Intake of Refined Grain Foods and Risk of Cardiovascular Disease

“ Refined grains are included in a dietary pattern that also includes red and processed meats, sugar-sweetened beverages, french fries, and high fat dairy products. It is very likely that these foods are the real culprits with this dietary pattern...not refined grains.

GLENN GAESSER, PHD
Professor of College of Health Solutions
Arizona State University



Glenn's meta analysis finds no connection between intake of refined grains and risk of cardiovascular disease, as he explains in this video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k6gys7OBNKI>. Credit: Grain Foods Foundation.

A new study recently published *Trends in Cardiovascular Medicine* reveals that consuming high intakes of refined grain foods does not increase one's risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD), coronary heart disease, heart attack, heart failure, or stroke. The study also calls for reflection on the Western dietary pattern and its consideration in future dietary recommendations. Although refined grains are included as a component of the Western dietary pattern, the results of the meta-analyses suggest that refined grains do not contribute to the higher CVD risk associated with this unhealthy dietary pattern.

The study demonstrated the lack of association between refined grain intake and CVD risk in [meta-analyses](#) of 17 prospective studies (including 877,462 participants) that restricted analyses to only staple grain foods (e.g., bread, cereal, pasta, white rice), as well as for meta-analyses of studies that included both staple and indulgent grain foods (e.g., cakes, cookies, doughnuts, brownies, muffins, pastries).

"These new results call into question the widely held view that refined grain foods are associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease," said Dr. Glenn Gaesser, a professor in the College of Health Solutions at Arizona State University and author of the new study.

"Refined grains are typically included in the Western dietary pattern that also includes red and processed meat, sugar-sweetened beverages, French fries, and high fat dairy products. Research shows that it is these foods, especially red and processed meat, and [sugar-sweetened beverages](#), that are the real culprits in this dietary pattern. Meta-analyses in the new study indicate that the higher CVD risk associated with this dietary pattern is not from refined grain foods."

Refined grains are grains that have been milled, a process that removes

the bran and germ to extend the grain's shelf life. This process removes some of the original fiber and B vitamins from the [food](#), but they are often enriched with additional B vitamins and iron.

This study follows [a recent commentary](#) from Gaesser published in *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* that examined data from existing published studies to reveal no link between type 2 diabetes and consumption of refined grains.

"It is my hope that these new results will be considered in the formulation of future dietary guidelines for Americans," added Gaesser. "I think it's important that the nutrition community acknowledges these results, and while still promoting, rightfully so, increased consumption of whole grain foods, it doesn't have to come at the expense of refined grain foods. Refined grain foods can fit in a healthy diet."

The study was published in *Trends in Cardiovascular Medicine*.

More information: Glenn A. Gaesser, Refined grain intake and cardiovascular disease: Meta-analyses of prospective cohort studies, *Trends in Cardiovascular Medicine* (2022). [DOI: 10.1016/j.tcm.2022.08.002](#)

For more information about the research findings, and to learn more about grain foods' role in a healthful diet, please visit www.GrainFoodsFoundation.org.

Provided by Grain Foods Foundation

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