

Yogurt consumption reduces cardiovascular disease precursor

25 October 2011, By Renee Sizer

Researchers at Sir Charles Gardener Hospital found that moderate daily consumption of yogurt prevents thickening of the carotid artery while the same consumption of milk and cheese had little effect in reducing CCA-IMT.

The full report, 'Association between [yogurt](#), milk, and cheese [consumption](#) and common [carotid artery](#) intima-media thickness and cardiovascular disease risk factors in elderly women,' was printed in the *American Society for Nutrition*.

The report suggests that, "Through its role in reducing IMT, prolonged daily yogurt consumption of 100 g/d may play a role in stroke and atherosclerosis prevention," and recommends further exploration of the benefits of yogurt and probiotics.

Accredited practicing dietitian Kerry Ivey says the study emerged because of the lack of research into the effect of whole foods on CCA- IMT, especially in relation to dairy products.

"In general, dairy products get a bit of a bad rap in regards to cardiovascular disease, but there has been a demonstrated cardiovascular benefit in probiotic and yogurt consumption," Miss Ivey says.

"We're trying to explore the benefits of yogurt as distinct from their dairy characteristics."

The trial used a cohort of 1,080 Perth women over the age of 70, who had been randomly selected for a 'Calcium Intake and Fracture Outcome Study'.

Participants answered food frequency questionnaires with the aid of a research assistant who used food models, cups, spoons and charts to ensure identical measurements representing consumption were used.

Three different measurements of the left and right carotid arteries at two different angles were

averaged out to find the participants mean intima-media thickness, both initially and after three years.

The participants' full medical history including BMI, smoking history, physical activity and lifestyle risk variables were put through statistical models.

Those with a high to moderate yogurt consumption of 100grams per day or above had significantly lower CCA-IMT than those with yogurt consumption of 100grams per day or less.

Research also highlighted that high milk and cheese consumption equalled higher CCA-IMT compared with high yogurt consumption.

HDL cholesterol was also increased due to moderate to high yogurt consumption which is also beneficial as higher levels of HDL are associated with reduced risk of [cardiovascular disease](#).

Miss Ivey says there are differing opinions as to why yogurt is beneficial for cardiovascular health.

The research team at Sir Charles Gardener Hospital's Endocrinology and Diabetes unit are planning another study focused on yogurt and its probiotics for metabolic syndrome to begin early 2012.

Provided by Sir Charles Gardener Hospital

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