

Yogurt may protect women from developing high blood pressure

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Women who ate five or more servings of yogurt per week had a lower risk of developing high blood pressure compared to those who rarely ate yogurt, according to research presented at the American Heart Association's Epidemiology/Lifestyle 2016 Scientific Sessions.

"No one food is a magic bullet but adding [yogurt](#) to an otherwise healthy diet seems to help reduce the long-term risk of high blood pressure in women," said Justin Buendia, lead author of the study and a Ph.D. candidate at Boston University School of Medicine in Boston, Massachusetts.

"I believe that this is the largest study of its kind to date to evaluate the specific effects of yogurt on blood pressure," he said.

To examine the long-term effects of eating yogurt on high blood pressure in middle-aged adults, researchers analyzed data on participants in two Nurses' Health Study cohorts (NHS and NHS II)—mostly women between 25-55 years old—and the Health Professionals Follow-up Study - mostly men between 40-75 years old.

During 18 to 30 years of follow-up, researchers documented 74,609 new cases of high blood pressure in the three study groups. After adjusting for other risk factors and diet, they found:

Women from the two NHS groups who ate five or more servings of yogurt per week (compared with those consuming one serving per month) had about a 20 percent reduction in the risk of developing high blood pressure, which was statistically significant.

Men in this study had much lower intakes of yogurt than women and, perhaps as a result, the effects of regular yogurt consumption were weaker.

The authors also evaluated whether the effects of consuming larger amounts yogurt were different

among subjects with a healthy overall diet. To do this, subjects were given a score to reflect how closely their diet matched that of a DASH diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension)—an eating plan designed to lower blood pressure.

The benefit of eating five or more servings of yogurt on the risk of high blood pressure was strongest among those with the highest DASH scores—that is, those who ate more fruits, vegetables, nuts and beans, other low-fat dairy and whole grains. In the pooled analysis, men and women who had a higher DASH score and who consumed yogurt five or more times per week had a 31 percent lower risk of developing high blood pressure compared with those who had the lowest yogurt intakes (one time per week) and the lowest DASH scores, he said.

Additionally, researchers noted that several servings of milk and cheese each day also had beneficial effects on blood pressure "although the effects of yogurt seemed stronger than other forms of dairy," Buendia said.

"Our study shows that daily intake of dairy products, particularly yogurt, lowers the risk for developing high [blood pressure](#), which is a key risk factor for the development of heart disease and stroke," he said.

Researchers had no information on the types of yogurt participants had eaten. "It would be interesting to see if popular yogurt types, such as Greek yogurt, had different effects than regular yogurt," he noted.

In the future, researchers hope to analyze yogurt intake among different subgroups such as African Americans, who are at higher risk for [high blood pressure](#), he said.

Provided by American Heart Association

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