

Combining low-salt, DASH diets may reduce cardiac damage

17 June 2021



(HealthDay)—Dietary interventions, like the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet and low sodium consumption, can improve cardiovascular risk factors in a relatively short time period, according to a study published in the June 1 issue of the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*.

Stephen P. Juraschek, M.D., Ph.D., from the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, and colleagues assessed effects of sodium reduction on [cardiac biomarkers](#), alone or combination with the DASH diet. Four hundred, twelve adults with [systolic blood pressure](#) (BP) 120 to 159 mm Hg and diastolic BP 80 to 95 mm Hg were randomly assigned to either the DASH diet or a control diet. Participants consumed each of three sodium levels for four weeks: low (50 mmol/day), medium (100 mmol/day), and high (150 mmol/day).

The researchers found that the DASH diet reduced high-sensitivity cardiac troponin I (hs-cTnI) by 18 percent and high-sensitivity C-reactive protein (hs-

CRP) by 13 percent. However, there was no decrease noted in N-terminal pro-B-type [natriuretic peptide](#) (NT-proBNP), compared to the control diet. Independent of diet, lowering sodium from high to low levels reduced NT-proBNP by 19 percent, but did not alter hs-cTnI and mildly increased hs-CRP (9 percent). Compared with the high sodium-control diet, combining DASH with sodium reduction lowered hs-cTnI by 20 percent and NT-proBNP by 23 percent, but hs-CRP was not significantly changed.

"We used highly sensitive markers of subclinical cardiovascular disease to show how two dietary strategies can improve distinct mechanisms of subclinical cardiac injury in a relatively short time period, suggesting that the improvements in cardiovascular disease risk factors observed from a reduced-sodium, DASH diet may also reduce concurrent cardiac damage," Juraschek said in a statement. "Our study has important clinical implications, and these findings should strengthen public resolve for public policies that promote the DASH dietary pattern and lower sodium intake in the United States and globally."

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APA citation: Combining low-salt, DASH diets may reduce cardiac damage (2021, June 17) retrieved 18 September 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-06-combining-low-salt-dash-diets-cardiac.html>

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