

Serve-Up Fruits and Veggies for Heart Health

Ever-increasing evidence mounts for the health-promoting values of fruits and vegetables: study shows reduced risk of heart disease and death.

Research continues to demonstrate the health benefits of a diet rich in fruits and vegetables. After all, many of our most important vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and other plant nutrients come from these colorful and flavorful foods.

A recent study further demonstrates the benefits of eating fruits and vegetables in reducing risk of heart disease, stroke and death from all causes. Researchers surveyed 9,608 men and women without heart disease history in 1971 about their diet and health and followed them over 21 years.

Compared with participants who ate less than 1 serving of fruits and vegetables daily, those who ate 3 or more daily servings had a 27% lower risk of stroke, 27% lower risk of death from heart disease, 42% reduced risk of death from stroke and a 15% decreased risk of death from all causes. This study shows a strong relationship with increased fruit and vegetable intake and reduced risk of heart disease.

Other large studies have similarly shown that 3 or 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day decrease the risk of ischemic (brain) stroke between 25-30%.

Because people who eat more fruits and vegetables are also likely have other healthy behaviors like eating less saturated fat and cholesterol and exercising, researchers suggest that these results may also relate to the overall *dietary pattern* that includes >3 daily servings of fruits and vegetables. They stress that the frequent daily consumption of fruits and vegetables – as whole foods – may decrease risk of heart disease and death due to the combined nutrients in the foods themselves, something not available in dietary supplements.

References:

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