

Heart-healthy diet helps men lower bad cholesterol, regardless of weight loss

May 1 2013

A heart-healthy diet helped men at high risk for heart disease reduce their bad cholesterol, regardless of whether they lost weight, in a study presented at the American Heart Association's Arteriosclerosis, Thrombosis and Vascular Biology 2013 Scientific Sessions.

The 19 24- to 62-year-old men in the study had metabolic syndrome, which refers to three or more significant [risk factors for heart disease](#) and stroke. The risk factors included in this study were high [waist circumference](#), high blood pressure, high levels of triglycerides and fasting glucose and low levels of [high density lipoprotein](#) or HDL "good" cholesterol.

For five weeks, the men followed a standard North American diet which is high in fats, carbohydrates, refined sugar and red meat. For a second five weeks, they ate a Mediterranean-style diet, which is high in fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and low in red meat. It also includes olive oil and moderate wine drinking.

The men then went on a 20-week weight-loss regime, then another five weeks of Mediterranean eating.

Regardless of whether patients lost weight, following the Mediterranean-style diet resulted in a 9 percent decrease in levels of [low density lipoprotein](#) (LDL) known as "bad" cholesterol. Similarly, blood concentrations of the protein part of the lipoprotein, called apolipoproteinB, dropped 9 percent after eating Mediterranean-style.

Apolipoprotein plays an important role in lipid transport and metabolism.

"The Mediterranean-style diet, or MedDiet, may be recommended for effective management of the metabolic syndrome and its related risk of cardiovascular disease," said Caroline Richard, M.Sc., study lead author and a registered dietician and Ph.D. candidate in nutrition under the mentorship of Benoît Lamarche, Ph.D. at Laval University in Québec, Canada.

Provided by American Heart Association

Citation: Heart-healthy diet helps men lower bad cholesterol, regardless of weight loss (2013, May 1) retrieved 3 July 2023 from

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