More Proof That Plant-Based Diets Can Improve Heart Health

Evidence consistently links diets rich in fruit and veggies to a reduced risk of developing and dying from major cardiovascular diseases.

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It's no secret that vegetarian and vegan diets are associated with a lower risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome. But these plant-based diets can also improve heart health, suggest recent findings published in the journal Progress in Cardiovascular Diseases, reports Medical News Today.

For the study, researchers from the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine in Washington, DC, examined information from a host of the most current clinical trials and inquiries that explored the benefits of a plant-based diet on cardiovascular health.

People who followed a vegetarian diet enjoyed a 40 percent reduction in the risk of coronary heart disease and death from cardiovascular disease. In addition, nearly 91 percent of patients experienced partial or full unblocking of clogged arteries. What's more, the risk of hypertension decreased by 34 percent.

"A plant-based diet has the power to not only prevent heart disease but also manage and sometimes even reverse it—something no drug has ever done," said Hana Kahleova, MD, PhD, of the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine in Washington, DC, a study author.

Kahleova noted that adherence to a healthy diet and lifestyle lowers heart attack risk up to 94 percent compared with drug therapy, which reduces risk by only up to 30 percent.

She also notes that this study shows that heart disease doesn't have to be the leading cause of death worldwide.

Click here to learn whether whole-food options that double for meat are healthier.

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