Yogurt May Help People Manage High Blood Pressure

People with hypertension who regularly ate yogurt saw a dip in blood pressure compared to those without the illness who consumed the food.

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Almost 47% of American adults live with high blood pressure, but only 24% are in control of their condition. However, eating only about one teaspoon of yogurt each day may help reduce blood pressure, according to study findings published in the International Dairy Journal, reports a press release from the University of South Australia (UniSA).

High blood pressure, aka hypertension, is the number one risk factor for heart disease and stroke, the leading causes of death in the United States. More men than women have high blood pressure, and the illness is more common in non-Hispanic Black adults than in non-Hispanic white or Asian adults and Hispanic adults, notes the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Researchers from UniSA and scientists from the University of Maine conducted a study on 915 adults from the Maine-Syracuse Longitudinal Study (MSLS).

MSLS was initially launched in 1974 to learn more about the connection between hypertension and cognition. (Later, the study grew to include investigations into how nutrition and multiple cardiovascular risk factors and diseases affect cognitive funtion.)

Next, scientists selected 564 participants with high blood pressure measurements equal to or greater than 140/90 and 351 people with normal readings. Using a food frequency questionnaire, researchers pinpointed the amount of yogurt everyone consumed.

“This study showed for people with elevated blood pressure, even small amounts of yogurt were associated with lower blood pressure,” said Alexandra Wade, PhD, a research associate at the university and a member of the school’s Alliance for Research in Exercise Nutrition and Activity. “And for those who consumed yogurt regularly, the results were even stronger, with blood pressure readings nearly seven points lower than those who did not consume yogurt.”

A fermented dairy food, yogurt may have the potential to lower blood pressure because it includes an assortment of micronutrients, such as calcium, magnesium and potassium, which the body uses to regulate blood pressure.

“Yogurt is especially interesting because it also contains bacteria that promote the release of proteins, which lowers blood pressure,” Wade added.

Researchers plan to conduct more observational and intervention studies to determine additional benefits this cool, creamy food might confer on people at risk for high blood pressure.

To learn more about additional possible health benefits yogurt might have, read "Is Yogurt the New Vaccine?"

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