

An Apple a Day Helps Keep a Lady's High Cholesterol Away

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Whether they're green, yellow or red, dried or fresh, apples improve women's cholesterol levels and reduce signs of inflammation—qualities, in turn, that suggest a reduced heart disease risk, according to a study presented at the Experimental Biology 2011 conference in Washington, DC, and reported by [Time](#).

For the study, Florida State University (FSU) researchers randomly assigned 160 women to eat about 3 ounces of dried apples or prunes daily. At three, six and 12 months, researchers tested the participants' blood to measure their heart health risk factors.

After a year, scientists found that women who ate dried apples lowered their cholesterol by 14 percent and their LDL (or bad) cholesterol levels by 23 percent while boosting their HDL (or good) cholesterol by 4 percent. Participants also saw a 32 percent decline in C-reactive protein, an indicator of inflammation (the body's response to infection or irritants) and a heart disease risk factor.

Researchers also noted that participants who ate prunes also experienced some cholesterol level improvements and reduced inflammation. But prune eaters' didn't reap as much benefits as those who ate apples, said Bahram H. Arjmandi, PhD, RD, a professor at FSU and the study's lead author.

What's more, women in the apple-eating group also experienced an added bonus. On average, these ladies dropped 3.3 pounds even though dining on dried fruits added 240 extra calories to their diets.

While the study used dried fruit for convenience, fresh fruit is likely to have even greater health benefits, Arjmandi explained.

Click [here](#) to learn what other health benefits you can get from fruits—and from veggies too.