Major Study Finds Saturated Fat May Not Cause Heart Disease

March 19, 2014

We've long been told that saturated fat—the type found in cheese, red meat and butter—can cause heart disease. However, new research suggests that there is no real medical evidence to support that claim, according to a study published in the journal Annals of Internal Medicine and reported by The New York Times.

The findings, which suggest that saturated fat is not actually a huge concern for our diets, drew on nearly 80 studies involving more than half a million people.

Scientists looked at what subjects reportedly ate, the fatty acid content in their bloodstreams and their overall body fat composition; researchers then compared this data with the rates of cardiovascular disease.

They also reviewed evidence from 27 randomized controlled trials that assessed whether unsaturated fat—the type found in fish oils, nuts and vegetables—could promote heart health.

Ultimately, researchers found that people who ate higher levels of saturated fat in their diets did not have an increased rate of heart attacks or other cardiac events. They also didn't find less heart disease in subjects who ate higher amounts of unsaturated fat.

What's more, the study showed that saturated fats are not the main culprit for raising a person's LDL cholesterol (the "bad type" that has been linked in many studies to heart disease). Instead, sugary foods and an excess of carbohydrates seem to drive these numbers up most significantly.

Experts now say future dietary guidelines should focus more on consuming healthier, real foods, rather than putting absolute limits on certain macronutrients.

To read the Times article, click here.

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