



Avocados; The New Cholesterol Fighters?

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The humble avocado may not look like much—green and scaly with a giant seed in the middle—but according to new research, eating one avocado daily could be a powerful way to help curb high cholesterol, and may possibly boost your intelligence at the same time.

The latest research, which was supported by a grant from the Hass Avocado Board, was published in the *Journal of the American Heart Association*. The study examined the effects of three different cholesterol-lowering diets on 45 overweight or obese participants with low to high cholesterol; every participant tried each diet for five weeks.

The three diets consisted of a lower-fat diet (24% fat) and two moderate fat diets (34% fat). One of the moderate fat diets included one avocado (136 g) daily, while the other did not. Here's what the researchers discovered:

- ✓ All three diets lowered cholesterol in the participants, but the moderate fat diet that included an avocado lowered it the most: these participants saw their LDL ("bad") cholesterol drop by 13.5 mg/dL (milligrams per deciliter) and their HDL ("good") cholesterol drop by 14.6 mg/dL. Those on the other moderate fat diet experienced LDL and HDL decreases of 8.3 mg/dL and 8.7 mg/dL, and those eating the lower-fat diet experienced LDL and HDL decreases of 7.4 mg/dL and 4.8 mg/dL.
- ✓ The avocado-containing diet also significantly decreased small, dense LDL particles—small LDL particles have been associated with a greater risk of coronary heart disease, as well as decreasing VLDL (very low density lipoproteins) which present the highest risk for artery and heart disease.
- ✓ The avocado-containing diet also decreased the ratio of LDL to HDL, improving the ratio of bad to good fats.

While this study involved a small number of participants and therefore requires more research, the findings are promising as they offer a safe and tasty way to lower cholesterol.

In consumer tests, avocados eaten daily by groups with high mental stress, concentration problems, and difficulty with memory retrieval produced a decrease in mental stress and improved "brain fog" and mental clarity.