New Study SUGGESTS Almonds May Help reduce risk of Type 2 Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease

Modesto, CA (January 10, 2011) – With nearly 16 million Americans living today with pre-diabetes, a condition that is the precursor to type 2 diabetes, and half of all Americans expected to have some form of diabetes by the year 2020, healthy eating is more important than ever.\(^1,2\) But here is some good news: a recent scientific study shows that incorporating almonds into your diet can help treat and possibly prevent type 2 diabetes, as well as cardiovascular disease.

The study, published in the June 2010 *Journal of the American College of Nutrition* and one of the first of its kind to quantify prevention data, illustrates that consuming a diet rich in almonds may help improve insulin sensitivity and decrease LDL-cholesterol levels in those with pre-diabetes.\(^3,4\)

“We have made great strides in chronic disease research from evidence of effective treatment to evidence of effective prevention” said Dr. Michelle Wien, Assistant Research Professor in Nutrition at Loma Linda University’s School of Public Health and Principal Investigator for this study, which was conducted at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. Wien adds, “It is promising for those with risk factors for chronic diseases, such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease, that dietary changes may help to improve factors that play a potential role in the disease development.”

The study looked at the effects of consuming an almond-enriched diet as it relates to the progression of type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease in adults with pre-diabetes. After 16 weeks of consuming either an almond-enriched or regular diet, both of which conformed with American Diabetes Association (ADA) recommendations, the group that consumed an almond-enriched diet showed significantly improved LDL cholesterol levels and measures of insulin sensitivity, risk factors for heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

**Study at a Glance:**

- **The People:** 65 adults with pre-diabetes (48 women and 17 men) with an average age in the mid-50s.\(^3\)
- **The Diet:** The study population was randomly divided into either the group consuming almonds or the control group. The control group consumed a diet in accordance with the ADA recommendations. The group that consumed almonds followed the same diet, but with 20% of the calories from almonds.\(^4\) A caveat is that although study participants in both groups were instructed to consume the same amount of calories from carbohydrate-containing foods (i.e. bread, rice, pasta), there was less self-reported intake of carbohydrate-containing foods among those consuming the almond-enriched diet.\(^4\)
- **The Results:** The intervention group, who were on an almond-enriched diet, showed greater improvements in insulin sensitivity and clinically significant reductions in LDL-cholesterol as compared to the nut-free group.\(^4\)

Overall, this study suggests that consuming an ADA-recommended diet consisting of 20% of the total calories from almonds for 16 weeks is effective in improving LDL cholesterol levels and measures of insulin sensitivity in individuals with prediabetes.\(^4\) Nutrients in almonds,
such as fiber and unsaturated fat, have been shown to help maintain healthy cholesterol levels and increase insulin sensitivity, both of which help to prevent the development of type 2 diabetes and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.

It also provides evidence that suggests almonds contribute to heart health. However, it adds a new dimension to the existing research because it shows almond consumption not only aids in disease management, but may also help reduce the risk of certain chronic diseases. Almonds offer 3.5 grams of fiber, 13 grams of unsaturated fat and only 1 gram of saturated fat per one-ounce serving.5

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About Almond Board of California

Consumers all over the world enjoy California Almonds as a natural, wholesome and quality food product, making almonds California’s leading agricultural export in terms of value. The Almond Board of California promotes almonds through its research-based approach to all aspects of marketing, farming and production on behalf of the more than 6,000 California Almond growers and processors, many of whom are multi-generational family operations. Established in 1950 and based in Modesto, California, the Almond Board of California is a non-profit organization that administers a grower-enacted Federal Marketing Order under the supervision of the United States Department of Agriculture. For more information on the Almond Board of California or almonds, visit AlmondBoard.com.


3 Scientific evidence suggests, but does not prove, that eating 1.5 ounces per day of most nuts, such as almonds, as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease.
