EM9319a: Kitchener-Waterloo Record, March 4, 1993, page A1

Get cracking on walnut diet to cut cholesterol, study says

Los Angeles Times

LOMA LINDA, Calif. – Remember the oat bran craze? Get ready for walnuts.

In a study that is bound to generate interest among nutritionists and cardiologists – not to mention health-concious consumers – researchers at Loma Linda University report that walnuts reduce cholesterol levels in the blood and protect against heart disease.

The study found that men who consumed a diet rich in walnuts showed a 16 percent drop in so-called "bad" LDL cholesterol, although their so-called "good" HDL cholesterol also dropped, by five per cent. More important, however, is that the study found a beneficial 12 per cent decrease in the ratio of bad to good cholesterol among men who were fed the walnut diet.

However, some nutritionists and heart experts expressed skepticism about the usefulness of the study which appears in today’s *New England Journal of Medicine* and was financed by the California Walnut Commission, an agency that helps market walnuts.

According to these experts, it would be nearly impossible – and unwise – for consumers to duplicate the walnut diet, in which 20 per cent of the calories came from walnuts. The diet included three ounces of the nuts a day – slightly more than 68 pounds a year if eaten on a daily basis – and even the study’s authors acknowledged that the diet is impractical.

"It was an extreme diet; they made everything out of walnuts," said Walter Willett, a professor at the Harvard School of Public Health who studies the links between nutrition and disease. "I definitely would not recommend that as a pattern."

Willett also noted that other nuts may be equally beneficial – a statement with which the study’s authors concurred.

"I have this worry about some guy who just finishes this enormous filet mignon and has a hot fudge sundae and then orders walnuts, saying, ‘This will cover me, this is the magic bullet’," said Dr. William Castelli, director of the well-known Framingham Heart Study. "That’s not what they found in this study. You have to substitute."

EM9319b: The Toronto Star, March 4, 1993, page A2

Eating nuts helps heart, U.S. researchers report

BOSTON (AP) – Could the next health craze be – quite literally – nuts?

A new study concludes that nuts lower cholesterol.

Just how is a matter of dispute. But researchers have assembled two different lines of evidence suggesting that nuts in general, and walnuts in particular, are good for the heart.

"Including walnuts in the everyday diet may be an easy way to lower the risk of heart disease by improving the cholesterol profile," says Dr. Joan Sabaté of Loma Linda University, who directed the latest study.

The study, funded by the California Walnut Commission, is published in today’s *New England Journal of Medicine.*

The story began with a study of 31,208 Seventh-day Adventists, who generally avoid smoking and drinking. Researchers questioned them about their consumption of 65 different foods.

To researchers’ surprise, those who ate nuts at least five times a week had only half the risk of fatal heart attacks as those who had nuts less than once a week.

That discovery was published last summer in the *Archives of Internal Medicine.* The latest evidence, from the same team, strengthens the case.

This time, the researchers put 18 healthy volunteers on two carefully controlled diets for two months. One was a nut-free version of a standard low-cholesterol diet. The other was nutritionally similar, except 20 per cent of the calories came from walnuts.

On the no-nuts diet, the volunteers’ cholesterol levels fell 6 per cent. When they switched to the walnut diet, their cholesterol declined an additional 12 per cent. Everyone’s cholesterol dropped while eating nuts, and the average decrease was 22 points, from 182 to 160 mg/dl (473 to 415 mmol/L).

REFERENCES: Sabaté, J., Fraser, G.E., Burke, K., Knutsen, S.F., Bennett, H. and K.D. Lindsted: Effects of walnuts on serum lipid levels and blood pressure in normal men. *New Engl. J. Med.* **328**(#9): 603-607 (1993). [DC Library call number: PER R11.B7]

Fraser, G.E., Sabaté, J., Beeson, W.L. and T.M. Strahan: A possible protective effect of nut consumption on risk of coronary heart disease: the Adventist Health Study. *Arch. Internal Med.* **152**(#7): 1416-1424 (1992). [DC Library call number: PER R11.A87]

The articles EM9319a and EM9319b reprinted above atre used in Chapter 10 of the STAT 231 Course Materials and in Figure 2.19a of the STAT 332 Course Materials.