**Could WALNUTS prevent heart attack? Two handfuls a day 'lowers cholesterol and helps prevent heart disease'**

* **Review of 61 studies found walnuts help reduce LDL - 'bad' cholesterol**
* **The nuts contain key ingredients, including omega-3 and protein**
* **Two ounces of walnuts each day linked to strong reduction in cholesterol**
* **High cholesterol increases the risk of heart disease, and heart attack**

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Published: 20:51, 19 November 2015 | Updated: 23:00, 19 November 2015

Two handfuls of walnuts a day could help stave off heart disease, a new study has revealed.

The tree nuts lower total cholesterol levels in the body, thus reducing the chances of a person suffering a heart attack.

The snack contain important nutrients such as unsaturated fats, protein, vitamins and minerals, researchers said.

Dr Michael Falk, one of the authors from the Life Sciences Research Organisation, said: 'Our study results further support the growing body of research that tree nuts, such as walnuts, can reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases.

'Tree nuts contain important nutrients. Walnuts are the only nut that provide a significant amount - 2.5g per one ounce serving - of alpha-linolenic (ALA), the plant-based form of omega-3.'

Dr Falk and his team conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis of 61 controlled trials to arrive at their conclusions.

They found walnuts are effective in lowering total cholesterol, LDL, so-called 'bad' cholesterol, and ApoB, the primary protein found in LDL cholesterol.

These are key factors that are used to evaluate a person's risk of cardiovascular disease.

Dr Falk said the findings show consuming at least two servings - two ounces - of walnuts each day jas stronger effects of total cholesterol and LDL levels.

Additionally, the results showed that tree nut consumption may be particularly important for lowering the risk of heart disease in individuals with type 2 diabetes.

Of 1,301 articles reviewed, 61 trials met the eligibility criteria for Dr Falk's review - incorporating 2,582 people.

Trials directly provided nuts to the intervention group rather than relying solely on dietary advise to consume nuts.

The dose of nuts varied from five to 100g each day, and most participants followed their typical diet.

More than two decades of research has shown that walnuts may help lower cardiovascular risk factors by decreasing LDL by nine to 16 per cent, and diastolic blood pressure by 2-3mmHg2.

Studies have also shown the tree nuts can reduce total cholesterol, while increasing levels of HDL, or 'good' cholesterol, reducing inflammation and improving arterial function.

These factors are major contributors to heart disease risk, and reducing them is a critical step toward a healthier heart.

In addition to providing omega-3s, walnuts also deliver a convenient source of fiber (two grams per ounce) and protein (four grams per ounce).

The study is published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-3326062/Could-WALNUTS-prevent-heart-attack-Two-handfuls-day-lowers-cholesterol-helps-prevent-heart-disease.html#ixzz41Zhz4VsE>   
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