

[IMAGE]

Beans, Beans, the Magical Fruit

Over 1 million Americans develop some form of heart disease every year, largely attributable to high cholesterol levels in the blood. Soybean protein and dietary fiber have been shown to reduce a person's cholesterol levels. Although other peas, beans, and peanuts contain high levels of the proteins and water-soluble fiber found in soybeans, their influence on cholesterol, heart disease, and cardiovascular disease is unknown.

The data obtained in the First National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey were reviewed in a study of almost 10,000 people, published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*. Participants had initially answered questions indicating how often they consumed all types of legumes (dried beans, peas, peanuts, and peanut butter) over a three-month period, and were divided into categories based on legume intake levels. Researchers followed the participants over two decades, documenting cases of heart disease, cardiovascular disease, and resulting deaths as they occurred.

People who consumed an average of four or more servings of legumes per week were less likely to develop heart disease and cardiovascular disease than those who consumed legumes less than once per week. Those with higher legume intake also had lower average blood pressure and cholesterol, and decreased odds for developing diabetes and high blood pressure.

Many studies show that vegetable proteins are much healthier than proteins found in meats, and legumes are also excellent sources of fiber and contain no harmful cholesterol. Be sure to minimize the amount of meat in your diet (especially fatty or red meat), and try to eat some form of peas or beans daily. Some of your other legume options include: lentils, black-eyed peas, red beans, and black beans.

To find out more about the benefits of good nutrition, check out <http://www.chiroweb.com/tyh/nutrients.html>.

Reference:

Bazzano LA, He J, Ogden LG, et al. Legume consumption and risk of coronary heart disease in U.S. men and women. *Archives of Internal Medicine* 2001;161(21), pp. 2573-2578.

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http://www.toyourhealth.com/mpacms/tyh/article.php?id=172&no_paginate=true&no_b=true