

[IMAGE]

Something Fishy About Protecting the Heart

For years, scientists have examined the link between fatty fish and reduced risk of death from heart attack. Most research has pointed to the high levels of fatty acids in certain fish as one of the secrets to maintaining a healthy heart, but no one has been able to figure out exactly how these acids work.

New research from France has shed more light on the relationship between fatty fish and heart health. In this study published in *Circulation* (a journal of the American Heart Association), researchers tracked 9,700 men ages of 50- 59 who had no signs of heart disease, for two years. Among the factors the researchers documented were heart rate; blood pressure; cholesterol levels; and diet - including how often the men ate fish. A subgroup of 407 men also underwent a series of tests to determine levels of fatty acids in their blood.

Men who ate fish more than twice a week had an average heartbeat of 65.5 beats per minute, compared to 67.5 beats per minute for men who ate fish less than once a week. While it may not seem like a big difference, consider that in the course of a year, based on the above figures, the heart of a person who regularly ate fish would beat 1,051,200 times less than the heart of person who didn't eat fish regularly.

Eating fish had other benefits as well. Regular fish-eaters had higher levels of fatty acids in the blood, which help protect the heart. They also had lower triglyceride levels and lower blood pressure, and their HDL, or "good," cholesterol levels were higher than men who ate less fish.

If fish isn't already a regular part of your diet, now may be a good time to start including it. Fatty fish, such as salmon, mackerel and herring, contain high levels of omega-3 fatty acids, so they may offer the best protection against heart problems. Your doctor of chiropractic can help you draw up a diet that includes more servings of fish, and can discuss other ways of keeping your heart beating strong year after year.

Reference:

Dallongeville J, Yarnell J, Ducimetiere P, et al. Fish consumption is associated with lower heart rates. *Circulation* Aug. 19, 2003; Volume108, pp.820-825.

For more information on the benefits of nutrition, go to www.chiroweb.com/find/archives/nutrition.

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