

[IMAGE]

Say Hello to Chili Pepper

By Editorial Staff

Chili pepper might not be a regular staple of your diet, but it definitely should be if you consider the health benefits – including a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and all-cause mortality (death from any cause).

Research published in the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, this spicy fruit – yes, it's considered a fruit, not a vegetable, and is actually the fruit of a plant – evaluated chili pepper intake in nearly 23,000 men and women over a five-year period. Researchers categorized subjects' consumption into four groups: none/rare; up to two times per week; more than two, but less than four times a week; and more than four times a week.

During a follow-up period of more than eight years, researchers tracked deaths due to cardiovascular disease (or any other cause) and determined that subjects who consumed the most chili pepper (more than four times weekly) were significantly less likely to die of any cause compared to subjects who consumed the least (rare/none). Regular intake compared to little/none was also associated specifically with lower rates of ischemic heart disease.

chili pepper - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark The association was even stronger in subjects without high blood pressure (a risk factor for heart disease), but even people with hypertension benefited from eating chili peppers on a regular basis.

Which category of chili pepper consumption would *you* be in if you had participated in this study? If you're eating at least some chili pepper every week, great job – but even more could be better. If you're already eating it more than four times a week, great job – according to this study, it's benefiting your health. And if you rarely or never eat chili peppers, you may want to start – before you suffer the potential health consequences.

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