

[IMAGE]

Eat Less, More Often

Most people normally don't eat five or more small meals per day, but instead eat two-to-three larger meals for the sake of convenience and tradition. Yet studies have shown that a common American "gorging" diet - in which a person obtains total daily calories in only a few meals per day - may lead to higher levels of LDL, or "bad" cholesterol than a diet in which calories are divided among multiple meals throughout the day.

A recent study published in the *British Medical Journal* determined self-reported eating frequency; amount and types of nutrients eaten; and fat concentrations in the blood for nearly 15,000 people 45-75 years of age. Eating frequency per day was classified into five groups: one-to-two meals; three meals; four meals; five meals; or six-or-more meals.

Blood concentrations of "bad" and total cholesterol decreased steadily with an increasing number of meals eaten per day. Cholesterol levels were significantly lower in those eating six-or-more meals per day than in those eating only one or two meals. Despite lower cholesterol levels, eating more often was also linked to higher calorie, fat, carbohydrate, and protein consumption, however.

This study is one of many that show the benefits of eating numerous small meals per day, as opposed to only a few large ones. By consuming five or six daily meals, your body will also convert less of the food you eat into fat and maintain a constant blood-sugar level, making you less likely to experience periods of low energy. Be careful not to simply eat the same sized meals you eat now, but more often - or you might actually gain weight and raise your cholesterol.

Reference:

Titan SMO, Bingham S, Welch A, et al. Frequency of eating and concentrations of serum cholesterol in the Norfolk population of the European prospective investigation into cancer (EPIC-Norfolk): Cross sectional study. *British Medical Journal* 2001;323, pp. 1286-1288.

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

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