

Garlic Beneficial in Reducing Risk of Cardiovascular Disease.

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Cardiovascular disease or heart disease is a class of diseases that involve the heart or blood vessels (arteries and veins). There are several risk factors for cardiovascular disease that are essentially immutable. These are older age, male gender, and a family history of CVD.

Additionally, three major risk factors identified include cigarette smoking, dyslipidemia (high cholesterol), and hypertension. Other identified factors associated with increased risk for cardiovascular disease include physical inactivity, sleep problems, diabetes mellitus, rheumatoid arthritis, obesity, excessive intake of alcohol, thrombotic and fibrinolytic factors, elevated homocysteine levels, certain infections and inflammation, exogenously administered estrogens and androgens, certain psychosocial factors, increased fasting glucose and frequency of migraines. The synergism of the presence of multiple risk factors must also be considered.

From immune enhancement to cancer prevention, garlic may support health in many ways. What many people don't know, however, is that there is some controversy about the most effective form of garlic people should take. One of the biggest concerns about garlic is whether it is still active by the time it gets to the shelf for purchase. It is important to select a garlic product that guarantees potency. Keep in mind that raw garlic is more potent than cooked garlic, because heat inactivates the enzyme allinase. Allinase gives garlic its odor and stimulates the formation of allicin, which scientists believe may be the key to garlic's health-enhancing properties.

A meta-analysis published in the Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture investigated garlic's potential role in reducing cholesterol and triglyceride levels. The scientists identified a total of 26 randomized, double blind, placebo controlled studies to be included in the meta-analysis. The researchers found that different preparations of garlic had different effects, with dried garlic products affecting mostly cholesterol levels and fresh garlic preparations affecting triglyceride levels more. All results were dramatically better the longer the patients were including garlic in their treatment plan. These results indicate garlic could be an effective treatment for lowering cholesterol and triglyceride levels for patients with a history or risk of cardiovascular disease, especially as a long term strategy.¹

1 Zeng T, Guo FF, Zhang CL, et al. A meta-analysis of randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trials for the effects of garlic on serum lipid profiles. J Sci Food Agric. Jan2012.