

Daily Pecan Consumption May Help Reduce Cholesterol Levels

By: *Sci-News, News Staff*



In a new randomized, controlled trial, participants at risk for cardiovascular disease who ate pecans (*Carya illinoensis*) during an eight-week intervention showed significant improvements in total cholesterol, triglycerides and low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol.

Guarneiri *et al.* saw an average drop of 5% in total cholesterol and between 6% and 9% in LDL among participants who consumed pecans. Image credit: Jackie Matthews.

“Research indicates that tree nuts are cardioprotective, but studies on pecans are limited,” said Professor Jamie Cooper, a researcher in the Department of Nutritional Sciences at the University of Georgia, and colleagues.

“We examined the impact of daily pecan consumption on blood lipids and glycemia in adults at-risk for cardiovascular disease.”

The researchers assigned 52 adults between the ages of 30 and 75 who were at higher risk for cardiovascular disease to one of three groups.

One group consumed 68 grams (about 470 calories) of pecans a day as part of their regular diet; a second group substituted pecans for a similar amount of calories from their habitual diet, and a control group did not consume pecans.

At eight weeks, participants consumed a high-fat meal to determine changes in blood lipids and the amount of glucose in the blood.

There was a significant reduction in fasting total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, triglycerides, total cholesterol/high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol ratio, non-HDL cholesterol, and apolipoprotein B in the two pecan groups, with no changes in control.

There was also a reduction in triglycerides among participants who consumed pecans, and a reduction in glucose in the group that substituted pecans.

“The addition of pecans to the diet not only produced a greater and more consistent reduction in total cholesterol and LDL compared to many other lifestyle interventions, but may also be a more sustainable approach for long-term health,” Professor Cooper said.

“Some research shows that even a 1% reduction in LDL is associated with a small reduction of coronary artery disease risk, so these reductions are definitely clinically meaningful.”

The results were published in the *Journal of Nutrition*.

Liana L. Guarneiri *et al.* Pecan-Enriched Diets Alter Cholesterol Profiles and Triglycerides in Adults at Risk for Cardiovascular Disease in a Randomized, Controlled Trial. *Journal of Nutrition*, published online August 12, 2021; doi: 10.1093/jn/nxab248