

## Are You Over 50? Better Eat an Apple!



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According to researchers 8,500 UK deaths caused by heart attacks and strokes could be avoided each year if every person aged 50 years and over ate one apple a day.

Basing their assumptions on modelling rather than scientific study, researchers from the University of Oxford published their findings in the BMJ, stating that apples would boost cardiovascular health in the same manner as medicines (such as statins), with the added benefit of carrying none of the side-effects.

Population surveys suggest that the recommendation of eating five portions of fruit and vegetables a day is not followed by more than two-thirds of adults. Nine in 10 people do succeed in eating at least one portion a day however, yet Dr Adam Briggs and his colleagues from the British Heart Foundation Health Promotion Research Group at Oxford University believe we would all benefit from eating more.

If adults of all ages could manage to eat an extra portion of fruit or vegetable a day, as many as 11,000 vascular deaths could be averted each year, a fact of particular importance for the over-50s at increased risk of vascular diseases.

Prescribing either a cholesterol-lowering statin a day or an apple a day to people over 50, the researchers analysed the effect on heart attacks and strokes, the most common causes of vascular mortality. On the assumption at least seven in every 10 complied with the directive, the team calculated that statin drugs could save 9,400 lives and an apple a day 8,500 lives a year. Their research work rests on data comprising volumes of medical trials and observations, which involve hundreds of thousands of patients.

As per Dr Adam Briggs, lead researcher, any fruit should work, but getting people to comply could be challenging. The Victorians had it about right when they came up with their brilliantly clear and simple public health advice, 'An apple a day keeps the doctor away', and he believes that the team's findings demonstrate exactly how effective small changes in diet can be, and that a combination of drugs and healthier living can make a real difference in preventing heart disease and stroke.

Dr Briggs went on to clarify that no person currently on prescribed statins should replace the medication for apples, however the general public could all benefit from simply eating more fruit.

The Stroke Association's Dr Peter Coleman agreed with the benefits of a balanced diet, adding that apples have long been known as a natural source of antioxidants and chemical compounds called flavanoids, all of which are good for anyone's health and wellbeing.

In conclusion Coleman stated that the study's report shows that, as part of a healthy diet with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, a daily apple could help to reduce the risk of stroke and heart disease.

Source: [BBC](#)

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