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What food increases longevity by 20%?

Clue:



Introduction:

There is one food that is superior to all others when it comes to improving overall health. A 30-year study of over 100,000 individuals concluded that people who ate nuts on a daily basis had lower rates of heart disease, cancer, diabetes and autoimmune disorders (ref. 1,2).

1.

In addition, the more nuts they ate, the longer the average life span. The group that ate nuts on a daily basis had an average 20% reduction in mortality compared to the group that did not eat nuts. Moreover, the group that had the highest consumption of nuts had the lowest average weight. How could this be possible? After all nuts are rich in fats. How could eating more fat lead to weight loss?

The answer is simple. Nuts contain high levels of beneficial plant fats. These highly nutritious fats are slowly absorbed, and thus supply sustained energy levels. This is directly opposite to what happens with carbs, which are absorbed quickly leaving you hungry in a short time.

Not only are nuts rich in nutritious plant fats, they are also rich in fiber. Fiber slows the absorption of the carbs that are contained in the nuts. The fiber is also important in achieving regular bowel function and helps in relieving constipation. There is now evidence that nuts reduce the risk of colon cancer and diverticulitis.

Nuts are also rich in proteins. This may be especially important for individuals who have eliminated red meat from their diet.

Finally, there is the issue of **micronutrients**. Nuts have served as a food source for primates for millions of years. Nuts undoubtedly provided our ancestors with essential vitamins, minerals and other elements that they needed for optimal health.

In today's world most of our calories come from processed foods. Processing removes valuable nutrients. For example, in processing wheat the outer shell, which contains most of the nutrients, is removed to make white flour. White flour is used to make bread and pasta. To improve taste, sugar is added, and to improve shelf life, chemicals are added. The long-term health effect of most of these

preservatives have not been well studied, but there is reason for concern that these toxins could have a major adverse impact on our health.

Additionally, the lack of essential nutrients in processed foods leads to a craving for more food, but this craving is not satisfied with more processed foods. Thus, this craving promotes overeating and weight gain.

Nuts may prove to be nature's most perfect food source. Reducing your intake of processed food, and adding more nuts to your diet maybe the most practical first step to transitioning to a more nutritious diet, and a diet that makes it easier to lose weight.

Next month's "Ask the Doctor" will address the issues of what kind of nuts to eat, how much to consume, and more on how nuts can facilitate weight loss.

Reference:

1. Ying Bao MD. et.al. Association of Nut Consumption with Total and Cause-Specific Mortality. New England J. Medicine. Nov. 2013.

- Link to study NEJM:

<http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa1307352>

2. Link to report from Mayo clinic on value of nuts:

- <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/heart-disease/in-depth/nuts/ART-20046635>

The End