

Legumes boost heart health, according to new review study by Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine

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Consuming beans, lentils, peas, and other legumes reduces the risk for cardiovascular disease, coronary heart disease, and high blood pressure, according to a review published in *Advances in Nutrition*.

Researchers reviewed prospective cohort studies that assessed consumption of legumes on the risk for cardiometabolic diseases and related markers. The study found that those who consumed the most legumes reduced incidence rates for cardiovascular disease, coronary heart disease, and hypertension by as much as 10 percent when compared to those with the lowest intakes.

"Cardiovascular disease is the world's leading—and most expensive—cause of death, costing the United States nearly 1 billion dollars a day," says study co-author Hana Kahleova, MD, Ph.D., director of clinical research for the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine. "This study shows that an inexpensive, accessible, and common pantry staple could help change that: beans."

Beans and other legumes benefit cardiovascular health because they are high in fiber, plant protein, and other micronutrients, but low in fat, free of cholesterol, and low on the glycemic index, according to the study authors.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans says that Americans are not eating enough legumes and recommends eating about three cups per week. The average American consumes less than a cup a week.

"Americans eat less than one serving of legumes per day, on average," adds Dr. Kahleova. "Simply adding more beans to our plates could be a powerful tool in fighting heart disease and bringing down blood pressure."

Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S., responsible for approximately 1 in every 4 deaths. About 1 in 3 U.S. adults suffer from hypertension.

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