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According to a recent study of nearly 100,000 U.S. adults, people who consume more flavonoids (plant-based phytochemicals) may reduce their risk of cardiovascular disease related death.

INCREASED FLAVONOID INTAKE DECREASES RISK OF DEATH FROM CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE IN US ADULTS

Flavonoids are phytochemicals (plant-based compounds) which are known to be protective against a range of cardiovascular diseases. To date, however, few studies have thoroughly examined the different classes of flavonoids in relation to the risk of cardiovascular disease and death.

In a new study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, researchers analyzed the association between flavonoid intake and cardiovascular disease (CVD) mortality among participants in a large, prospective US study group.

The current study group included 38,100 men and 60,289 women that were part of the Cancer Prevention Study II Nutrition Cohort. In 1999, participants completed questionnaires on medical history, lifestyle behaviors, and an extensive food-frequency questionnaire. Based on the responses and 7 years of follow-up, associations were made between total intakes of flavonoids, 7 flavonoid classes, and CVD mortality.

Men and women with total flavonoid intakes in the top 20% had a lower risk of fatal CVD than individuals in the bottom 20% of total intake. Five flavonoid classes—anthocyanidins, flavan-3-ols, flavones, flavonols, and proanthocyanidins—were individually associated with lower risk of fatal CVD. In men, total flavonoid intakes were more strongly associated with stroke mortality than with ischemic heart disease.

Overall flavonoid consumption was associated with lower risk of death from CVD. In addition, the increase in benefit was seen even at intermediate intakes, suggesting that even relatively small amounts of flavonoid-rich foods may be beneficial.

Marjorie L McCullough et al. Flavonoid intake and cardiovascular disease mortality in a prospective cohort of US adults. First published January 4, 2012, doi: 10.3945/ajcn.111.016634 Am J Clin Nutr February 2012 ajcn.016634.