

Nutrition News You Can Use: DASH for Better Diabetes Control

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The Harvard-generated DASH Diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) which includes peanuts and peanut butter along with fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, lean meats and fish, and low fat dairy products as recommended food choices, is well known to be effective in helping control high blood pressure. Now researchers as wide-spread as the US, Germany and Iran have produced evidence associating adherence to the DASH Diet with reducing risk factors in people with Type 2 diabetes.

A recent study from the Isfahan University of Medical Sciences in Iran (with Johns Hopkins and Harvard collaborators including Walter Willett) was small but impressive in its results. Thirty-one type 2 diabetes patients followed DASH and a control diet each for 8 weeks. The calorie intake was the same on both diets. DASH plan adherents saw very favourable changes at the end of 8 weeks, including an average 5kg weight loss and metabolic changes such as fasting blood glucose levels and LDL cholesterol level reductions at least as great as could be expected from standard drug treatments. DASH also increased beneficial HDL cholesterol by about 10%, which appears to reduce risk of atherosclerosis and may provide additional benefits to LDL cholesterol lowering. A diabetes specialist on Medscape commented on the potential significance of the Iranian study, saying “These results suggest that the DASH diet could go a long way toward achieving many therapeutic goals for patient with diabetes. “

US researchers with German collaborators have assessed whether following the DASH plan could improve cardiovascular risk factors other than blood pressure in young people with diabetes. These young people also could benefit by improving their dietary quality and DASH can help with that also. The findings published online before print in the journal *Circulation*, show higher adherence to DASH was associated with lower LDL lipoprotein, total cholesterol and glycated haemoglobin levels compared to those young people who adhered poorly to the DASH plan. Body Mass Index also improved in the same relationship. Lead researcher Angela Liese’s team concluded that “the DASH dietary pattern may prove beneficial in the prevention and management of cardiovascular disease risk in this vulnerable population of youth with diabetes mellitus, among whom there is clearly much room for improvement in the quality of dietary intake.”

Clinical trials are showing that DASH works for a wider range of people with metabolic health needs. It is good to know that peanut products are an integral part of this attractive and beneficial eating plan.

References: Azadbakht, Fard NR, Karimi M et al. “Effects of the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) Eating Plan on cardiovascular risks among type 2 diabetes patients: a randomized cross over clinical trial. *Diabetes Care* 2011; 34: 55-57; Liese AD, Bortsov A, Gunther ALB et al. “Association of DASH Diet with cardiovascular risk factors in youth with diabetes mellitus” *Circulation* 2011 published online before print 21 March 2011. Nichols GA. “DASH Diet: not just for hypertension?” *Medscape Diabetes & Endocrinology*, 14 March 2011. www.medscape.com/viewarticle/738556



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