

Media Release

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NEW RESEARCH: Avocados can lower cholesterol without weight gain

A new review of the scientific literature on avocados and cardiometabolic health has found daily consumption of avocados can reduce total and LDL cholesterol levels in people with high cholesterol, which could deliver positive benefits for heart health.

High cholesterol currently affects more than 1.5 million Australians, including 21% of people aged 65 and over.¹

The systematic review, conducted by the CSIRO and published in the [Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#), also found eating as many as two avocados a day did not cause weight gain or increased body fat.

Nicole Senior, an Accredited Practising Dietitian and nutrition consultant to the avocado industry, said these findings are positive news for the increasing number of Australians with high blood cholesterol.

“Raised blood cholesterol - especially LDL which is the bad type of cholesterol - is a common issue for many Australians, and this review shows avocado can help bring it down,” Ms Senior said.

Weight gain no issue

The new review found that larger than usual daily intakes of avocado do not cause weight gain.

“The high daily amounts of avocado eaten in these research studies did not impact weight, which is good news for people who have been limiting how much avocado they eat due to concerns around weight gain. It shows avocados can be included in kilojoule-controlled diets designed for weight loss or maintenance,” Ms Senior said.

More avocado for maximum health benefit

Based on the most recent data, the average consumption of avocados is relatively low in Australia, estimated at around 3g per person per day across the population, and 16g per day in avocado consumers.² This compares to the recommended daily serving, which is half a medium avocado or 75g.

The amount of avocado consumed in the studies included in CSIRO’s review was well above the current average and recommended intakes.

The CSIRO review found the amount of avocado that produced beneficial results on blood cholesterol levels ranged from 99g to 330g per day - the equivalent of three quarters to just over two avocados (2.2) per day.

“So CSIRO’s analysis of the data shows there may be potential for health improvement in the Australian population from increasing avocado consumption above current daily intakes,” Ms Senior said.

“Increased intake could lead to an improvement in cardiometabolic health which may, in turn, help reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease in the Australian population, as part of an overall heart-healthy diet,” she said.

Hort Innovation CEO Brett Fifield said the findings from the CSIRO study will be welcome news for both producers and consumers of Avocado.

“As a grower-owned research and development corporation, we invest in a range of projects that advance and promote Australia’s horticulture industry. It’s great to see our work with CSIRO will give health professionals and consumers more information about including avocados in their diet,” Mr Fifield said.

Wider health benefits

Avocados not only help reduce some risk factors associated with heart disease, they provide a wide range of additional health benefits. Avocado consumers are reported to have healthier diets overall, which may be in part due to avocado’s contribution to nutrient intake or the replacement of less healthy foods.

“Analysis of both Australian and US dietary intake data³⁻⁵ shows avocado consumers have higher intakes of dietary fibre, healthy fats (monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats), vitamin E, magnesium and potassium, along with higher intakes of fruit and vegetables and lower intakes of less healthy ‘discretionary’ foods,” Ms Senior said.

“Avocado consumers also had lower body mass index (BMI) and waist circumference than non-consumers,” she said.

Further research

Ms Senior said while the number of published studies on avocados and health in the international literature is limited, with differing design and quality, the results of the CSIRO review are positive.

“Given the potential health benefits we could gain, there is a need for additional well-designed studies that can help us better understand how eating avocados can support cardiometabolic health, with an increased focus on different population groups who are at increased risk of developing non-communicable diseases,” Ms Senior said.

“This research gives us confidence when recommending a nutritious plant-based diet that includes plenty of vegetables and fruits, such as avocado, for a healthy heart,” she said.

ENDS

Resources for media use:

- **Photographs and infographics** are available for media use at this [Dropbox link](#).
- A **summary** of the health and nutrition benefits of avocados is [available online here](#). Other consumer **resources available** on the web include a [Heart Health](#) resource and [7 Day Meal Plan](#).
- For **more information**, or to **arrange an interview**, contact:
Owen Craig, Bite Communications: owen@bitecom.com.au or 0409 030 708.

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[References: at this link](#)