

Almonds and almond oil have similar effects on plasma lipids and LDL oxidation in healthy men and women.

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Abstract:

Epidemiologic and clinical studies have shown that nut consumption is associated with favorable plasma lipid profiles and reduced cardiovascular risk. These effects may result from their high monounsaturated fat (MUFA) content but nuts contain constituents other than fatty acids that might be cardioprotective. We conducted a study to compare the effects of whole-almond vs. almond oil consumption on plasma lipids and LDL oxidation in healthy men and women. Using a randomized crossover trial design, 22 normolipemic men and women replaced half of their habitual fat (-14% of -29% energy) with either whole almonds (WA) or almond oil (AO) for 6-wk periods. Compliance was ascertained by monitoring dietary intake via biweekly 5-d food records, return of empty almond product packages and weekly meetings with a registered dietitian. Fat replacement with either WA and AO resulted in a 54% increase in percentage of energy as MUFA with declines in both saturated fat and cholesterol intake and no significant changes in total energy, total or polyunsaturated fat intake. The effects of WA and AO on plasma lipids did not differ compared with baseline: plasma triglyceride, total and LDL cholesterol significantly decreased, 14.4 and 6% respectively, whereas HDL-cholesterol increased 6% neither treatment affected in vitro LDL oxidizability. We conclude that WA and AO do not differ in their beneficial effects on the plasma lipid variables measured and that this suggests that the favorable effect of almonds is mediated by components in the oil fraction of these nuts. *J. Nutr.* 132: 703-707, 2002