

# Cardiovascular disease eating habits and food health essay

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## **Abstract**

Throughout history food choices and eating habits have changed and have added to the many illnesses such as cardiovascular disease. Although, choices and habits have been the cause of some diseases and diverse varieties of foods have also helped in managing the prevention of chronic health diseases. Foods that are known to assist in the prevention of chronic health conditions are fish due to omega-3, fruits, vegetables, whole grains and nuts. These foods also reduce levels of cholesterol (High Density Level) and other heart related diseases.-3-

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## **Food Choices, Eating Habits and CVD.**

According to Hu (2003) the cause of the increase may be due to the lack of hormone insulin becoming less effective and this may be due to increased

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amounts in consumer consumption. Hu (2003) further adds people that have died from cardiovascular diseases was due to consumption refined grains and a variety of processed foods. In addition Hu (2003) believes that plant-based diet assist in the prevention of cardiovascular disease. (Hu 2003, p. 549S).

### **Beneficial Foods vs. Detrimental Foods: Nuts & Apples.**

Reviewing the article Adventist Health Study and Nurses' Health Study conducted by Hu (2003) indicated consumption of nuts linked to obesity due to their high calorie components. Hu (2003) believes nuts provide protein and fibre and other important minerals and saturated fats, high levels of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated, no cholesterol, Phytochemicals, such as phytoestrogens (isoflavones) and phenolic compounds, allagic acid and flavonoids, Dietary fibre, Plant protein, which makes them a good alternative to meat. (Sabate et al. 2010, p. 133). Nuts are also high in the amino acid, arginine, Vitamins E, B6, niacin and folate, minerals such as magnesium, zinc, iron, calcium, copper, selenium and potassium. All of these assist in the improvement of insulin effectiveness and the reduction to cardiovascular diseases, promotes body growth via development of cells and the production of red blood cells which prevents Anaemia and other blood disorders. (Sabate et al. 2010, p. 133).-5-Hu (2003) further adds that other effective components derived from nuts such as omeg-3 form protective lining around the heart preventing thickening of artery walls. Like with anything, moderation is the key. (Sabate et al. 2010, p. 133). Apples: Evidence suggests that apples (fruit and vegetables) decrease the risk of cardiovascular diseases and other diseases such as diabetes, asthma and

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cancer if consumed regularly on a daily basis. (Boyer et al 2004). Apples are high in fibre, decrease cholesterol levels and decreased lipid oxidation. Apples encompass a wealth of phytochemicals, including quercetin, catechin, phloridzin and chlorogenic acid, all of which are strong antioxidants. The phytochemical in apples fluctuates considerably amongst different varieties of apples there are also minute changes in phytochemicals during the maturation and ripening of the fruit. . (Hu, 2003, p. 547S). Walnuts: One of the healthiest nuts that can reduce LDL in which can help the heart by reducing the risk of heart disease and inflammation. Walnuts a great source for optimal brain function. Walnuts contain diverse range of antioxidants one of them known as allagic acid, it also contains 16 disease-fighting polyphenols that are responsible in limiting the aging of arteries. (Sabate et al. 2010, p. 130-133). Likewise, walnuts comprise of excessive amounts of  $\alpha$  – linoleic acid. Both (Hu 2003 and Sabate et al 2010) state walnuts are a great way to reduce cholesterol and reduce risks of cardiovascular diseases. Extended research conducted by Hu (2003) demonstrated that other researchers such as Torabian et al. 2010, support this also, walnuts should be included as part of ongoing diet in order to minimise chronic health conditions and other heart related diseases and to assist in reducing or maintaining, low cholesterol levels. (Hu, 2003 and Sebate et al 2010).-6-

### **Whole grains vs. Refined Grains:**

According to Hu's (2003) article, whole grains contain many important nutrients such as fatty acids which are fundamental to cellular function. Whole grains are also high in fibre and an excellent source of antioxidants. Whole grains are easy to access, are affordable and is a source of diet in

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throughout many countries. Whole grains due to milling process become refined and this process strips the bran and removing vital nutrients suggesting a correlation to many health issues such as CDV. (Hu 2003, p. 5495). From the article, studies conducted in " The Nurses' Health Study" suggests whole grains consumption reduces the risk of CVD also maintains homeostasis and good flow of blood supply to the brain which further reduces the risk of strokes. Consequently, Phillips 2012, states if whole grain is part of an ongoing diet, then death rates of women would reduce considerably. (Phillips 2012, p. 280-285). Equally, non- refined foods such as brown rice has been known to reduce LDL cholesterol, brown rice is also responsible in reducing the risk of CDV, and blood disorders such as diabetes type II and many cancers. Whole grains are known to contain their own antioxidants responsible in protecting the lining of the gut and its natural micro-flora via plant sterols in which are further responsible in reducing cholesterol production. According to research, there is enough evidence to suggest that whole grain consumption may very well play an important factor in reducing LDL cholesterol when not refined. (Phillips 2012, p. 283. 286).-7-

## **Unsaturated Fats vs. Saturated Fats**

As we know obesity is high in three main countries due to refined processed food, and the countries most affected are Australia, USA and England. Hu (2003) raises concerns and confirms that a diet high in nuts and vegetable oil are responsible in weight gain due to the high energy density these foods comprise of. However, studies have also proven reduced fat dietary guidelines have had an impact in lowering cardiovascular diseases. Although

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this may be the case, a report provided by Hu 2003, states that there is a substantial link to fatty food diets to a spike in obesity in the United States. In stating this, Hu (2003) does not believe small amounts of fat is harmful. Common diseases associated with obesity are stroke, heart attack and overall chronic health conditions such as CDV. (Hu 2003, p. 549S). Other important factors Hu (2003) mentions is that in order to address a health weight loss program, plant based foods should be considered, as it is responsible in weight loss and limits the risk of CVD. He further adds proper fats found in healthier foods contain nonanimal fats are known as monounsaturated fats such as avocado and olive oil. He further adds that liquid vegetable oils are high in Vitamin E and antioxidants. Additionally, simple foods such as oats are great way in cholesterol absorption. (Hu 2003, p. 549S).

### **Red meat Vs. Fish.**

Red meats compared to Fish have always been labelled as a no go. Red meats in the past have been made out to be responsible for many CDV diseases and high cholesterol. (Erlinger et al 2003). Although Hu (2003), supports that plant based food-8-are better for us overall, he also supports that red meat contributes to some form of disease such as CDV. Hu (2003) further adds a full plant based diet or fish is not going to protect a person from diseases but has a better chance in preventing them and assists our body to fight back more strongly. This argument and study is supported by Nurses' Health Study which clearly suggest consuming white meats such as fish and chicken are better for you, lowers cholesterol and protects a person from developing CDV and other chronic illnesses. (Hu, 2003, p. 547S).

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According to Etherton et al 2013 and AHA Science Advisory in regards to the consumption of white meat such as fish, clearly state the benefits in consuming natural fish Oil, Lipids benefiting Coronary Heart Disease. The benefits of omega-3 can prevent cardiovascular disease. Also beneficial in pre exposed patients with CVD as well as in healthy individuals. Evidence shows omega-3 fatty acids plays an impact on how the functions such as antiarrhythmic effects and the mechanics of heart functions. All of the above findings support Hu's (2003) argument that small amount of meats is ok. (Etherton, K. et al 2013).-9-

## **Conclusion**

Compared to diets in Europe and Asian countries the Western World have a considerable high percentages of CDV due to refined processed foods and not enough of wholesome foods either by choice, money or lack of education. This quite clear and has been supported by evidence argued by Hu (2003) and others. There is no doubt that plant based foods are better for you and contribute the wellbeing of overall one's health and of course the heart.-10-