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Probiotic twice a day zaps 'bad' cholesterol, could prevent heart disease

Thursday, November 08, 2012 by: Sherry Baker, Health Sciences Editor
Tags: [probiotics](#), [bad cholesterol](#), [heart disease](#)



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(NaturalNews) For decades, natural health and nutrition advocates have advised paying attention to our internal environment for optimum health - specifically, to make sure the "good" bacteria in our gastrointestinal tract was plentiful by eating yogurt and other fermented foods and/or taking probiotic

supplements. Once considered fringe, "health nut" advice, scientists have recently documented multiple ways probiotics can benefit health. Now, at the *American Heart Association's* Scientific Sessions 2012 currently underway in Los Angeles, researchers have announced taking a probiotic supplement might help prevent heart disease.

According to Mitchell L. Jones, M.D., Ph.D., lead author of the study and a research assistant in the faculty of medicine at *McGill University* in Montreal, taking twice daily doses of a probiotic lowered key cholesterol-bearing molecules in the blood, caused "bad" cholesterol level (the kind that clogs arteries) to plunge and made the total cholesterol count healthier.

This is a particularly important study for mainstream medicine to be aware of because of two reasons. First, it involved a double blind study in humans. And second, it shows that a natural substance can do something Big Pharma's side effect-ridden statins can't do -- lower "bad" cholesterol without potential harm.

In earlier studies, a strain of live probiotic microorganisms (*Lactobacillus reuteri*) had shown promise in lowering blood levels of LDL or "bad" cholesterol. For the new study, the investigators looked to see if the same [probiotic](#) could lower LDL and reduce molecules of cholesterol attached to fatty acids known as cholesterol esters. A combination of elevated cholesterol esters plus high LDL has been tied to dangerous plaque buildup in the arteries, resulting in a heightened risk of [heart disease](#).

The study involved 127 adult research subjects who all had high cholesterol. About half the patients took the probiotic two times a day, while the rest were given placebo capsules. After just nine weeks, those taking the probiotic had LDL levels 11.6 percent lower than those on placebos. In addition, [cholesterol](#) esters were reduced by 6.3 percent and cholesterol ester saturated fatty acids fell by almost nine percent, compared with the placebo group.

The people taking the probiotic had no side effects and, as the researchers noted, the probiotic strain *L. reuteri* has a long history of safe use.

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As *Natural News* previously reported, other breakthrough research published in the journal *Nature* strongly indicates an imbalance of "good" versus "bad" bacteria in the intestinal tract appears to trigger Type II diabetes --and [probiotics](#) may help prevent or treat that condition, too. In addition, scientists have also discovered that probiotics can increase the body's immune response to the flu virus and may be an effective treatment for inflammatory bowel diseases such as Crohn's and ulcerative colitis.

Sources:

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Sherry Baker is a widely published writer whose work has appeared in Newsweek, Health, the Atlanta Journal and Constitution, Yoga Journal, Optometry, Atlanta, Arthritis Today, Natural Healing Newsletter, OMNI, UCLA's "Healthy Years" newsletter, Mount Sinai School of Medicine's "Focus on Health Aging" newsletter, the Cleveland Clinic's "Men's Health Advisor" newsletter and many others.

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