

Vegetarians less likely to die from heart disease

By Huffington Post

Now this is a finding Bill Clinton can attest to.

In a new study confirming the heart-healthy benefits of a plant-based diet, researchers found that vegetarians are 32 percent less likely to die or be hospitalized because of heart disease.

The findings, which are published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, show that vegetarianism's positive effects on the heart largely lie with its cholesterol- and blood pressure-lowering abilities.

"The results clearly show that the risk of heart disease in vegetarians is about a third lower than in comparable non-vegetarians," study researcher Tim Key, deputy director of the Cancer Epidemiology Unit at the University of Oxford, said in a statement.

The study included 45,000 people from England and Scotland who were part of the European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition (EPIC)-Oxford study. Of those people, about 34 percent were vegetarian. They all had their blood pressure taken and blood samples drawn to measure cholesterol levels for the study.

The participants began the study in the 90s and were tracked until 2009; by that time, 1,235 had developed heart disease. Of those people, 1,066 people were hospitalized for heart disease, while 169 people died from heart disease.

After taking into account outside factors like age, exercise, socioeconomic background, smoking status, alcohol consumption

and education level, researchers found that vegetarians had a 32 percent lower risk of being hospitalized or dying from heart disease over the study period.

And when taking body mass index into account, they still had a 28 percent lower risk of developing heart disease than their meat-eating peers, the researchers found.

Of course, plant-based eating has also been linked with other health benefits, including living a longer life and having a lower risk of cancer.