

Forget five, now it's eight portions of fruit and veg a day

By JENNY HOPE
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For years the advice has been clear: eating five portions a day of fruit and vegetables is the key to a healthy life.
But five may no longer be enough.
A study has found that to get maximum defence against heart disease, you need to eat at least eight daily servings of fresh food.



Healthy harvest: Research shows we need to increase our intake of fruit and veg

The Government's five-a-day advice has its roots in World Health Organisation guidelines to include 14oz of vegetables in a daily diet.
But there have been doubts over whether eating more than this level of fruit and veg meant even greater health benefits. Now the new study suggests every extra portion provides added protection.
Significantly, those in the highest category – eating eight or more a day – have a 22 per cent lower chance of dying from heart disease than those who consume three portions, the UK average.
A 'portion' weighs just under 3oz, equal to a small banana, a medium apple or a small carrot.
The findings come from an ongoing European investigation into diet and health, looking at 300,000 people in eight countries.
Dr Francesca Crowe, of Oxford

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University, is working on the project.

She said that although ischaemic heart disease (IHD) – the most common form – was less likely in those who ate lots of vegetables, it could be explained because these people might also have healthier lifestyles.

However, the study specifically showed a reduced risk of dying from IHD of around four per cent for each additional portion of fruit and veg consumed above the lowest category, which was those who ate two or fewer portions.

The average intake of fruit and vegetables across all the countries in the study was five portions. People in Greece, Italy and Spain ate more and those in Sweden less.

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Professor Sir Michael Marmot, of the University College London, said the findings were of 'huge practical importance'.

He said: 'Cardiovascular disease is the most common cause of death. A reduction of 22 per cent is huge. There would need to be big shift in dietary patterns to achieve this healthy consumption of eight portions a day. It is worth trying to move in that direction.'

Scientists have previously suggested 15,000 lives a year could be saved if everyone ate five a day.

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If I ate that much fruit and veg (8 x 30z) plus the other food groups I would never be out of the bathroom and in pain with fissures.. At 54 I have variable IBS, I eat one apple, a potato and a 2 carrots in a day plus meat and gravy type dinners and apart from the IBS strangely I am well, have good skin and never get colds.

- one mum, UK , 21/1/2011 20:02

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Bill, I have never EVER known a vegetarian or non-smoker who believes they'll live forever. - Carol Brown, Adelaide, South Australia, Of course not. Just like you have



she emerged from a salon in Beverly Hills



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