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By Carl Collen

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Avocado health benefits highlighted

US nutrition expert says avocado consumption can reduce bad cholesterol, which leads to heart disease



One of the United States' leading nutrition experts says everyone should eat an avocado a day after apparently proving the fruit can reduce bad cholesterol, which causes heart disease.

New research, published by the Journal of the American Heart Association, studied the effect avocados had on cardiovascular risk factors by replacing saturated fatty acids from an average American diet with unsaturated fatty acids from avocados.

They concluded the good fats found in avocados can help lower bad cholesterol levels, particularly for people who are overweight and obese.

The research has been lauded by Australian health coach and 'I Quit Sugar' guru, Sarah Wilson, who on her blog says the news is a great reason to celebrate.

"Just as we've long suspected, a diet that includes an abundance of these creamy

green treats is now proven to help stave off bad cholesterol," she says.

In the US study, 45 healthy but overweight or obese patients between the ages of 21 and 70 were put on three different cholesterol-lowering diets for five weeks. One group ate a lower fat diet without avocado, one consumed a moderate-fat diet without avocado, while the last group had a moderate-fat diet plus one avocado every day.

Dr Penny M. Kris-Etherton, senior study author, chair of the American Heart Association's Nutrition Committee and Distinguished Professor of Nutrition at Pennsylvania State University, says the subsequent blood results were clear. Those who ate a moderate-fat diet plus an avocado every day had lower bad cholesterol levels than those on a similar diet without the avocado or those on the lower-fat diet.

"We need to focus on getting people to eat a heart-healthy diet that includes

avocados and other nutrient-rich food sources of better fats," Kris-Etherton concluded. "Avocados can also be eaten with salads, vegetables, sandwiches, lean protein foods (like chicken or fish) or even whole."

New Zealand Avocado CEO Jen Scouler welcomed the new research findings, saying Kiwis can easily take advantage of the health advice because we grow an abundance of avocados here in New Zealand.

"New Zealand produces some of the finest avocados in the world, and we're used to seeing them on our supermarket shelves." Kiwis love experimenting with avocados in the kitchen, using them to make simple snacks like avocado on toast, delicious summer salads, smoothies and desserts, and people are more confident about cooking with them than ever before.

"Avocados are getting a lot of positive

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media coverage these days which is wonderful. Consumers are learning more about their nutritional benefits and are really getting the hang of choosing and using avocados.”

Scoular says it's easy to incorporate avocados into your daily diet. “They're amazing anytime, and you can enjoy them for breakfast, lunch and

dinner. Avocado oil is a healthy and tasty replacement for canola or vegetable oils when cooking. Or try swapping mayonnaise for avocado next time you make a sandwich or salad,” she suggests.

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