

## **Fiber Protects Women against Heart Disease**

NEW YORK (Reuters Health)--A fiber-rich diet, especially from breakfast cereals, reduces a woman's risk of coronary heart disease (CHD), the leading cause of death among women, researchers report.

"An increase in foods high in dietary fiber, especially cereal products, may be protective against CHD in women. This provides further reason to replace refined forms of starch with whole-grain products," write study authors Dr. Alicja M. Wolk, of the Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, Sweden and colleagues in the June 2 issue of The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA).

Other researchers have documented the benefits of a high fiber diet for men, but previous studies on women have been "sparse," note Wolk and colleagues.

In their 10 year study of nearly 69,000 women, the authors found that those who ate the most dietary fiber had a 23 percent lower risk of coronary heart disease than those who ate the least, after adjusting for other, nondietary cardiovascular risk factors.

Breakfast cereal fiber, rather than vegetable or fruit fiber, appeared to be the most protective against CHD, the researchers found.

Women in the high fiber group consumed an average of 22.9 grams of fiber per day; those in the low fiber group consumed an average of 11.5 grams a day, according to Wolk and colleagues.

A half-cup serving of wheat bran cereal contains approximately four grams of fiber, according to the American Medical Association's book, "Complete Guide to Women's Health."

Most American women consume only half of the 25 to 30 grams of fiber recommended daily. If a woman eats high-fiber bran cereal for breakfast, an apple as a snack, and an ear of corn and a carrot at dinner, she has consumed 30 grams of fiber, according to the AMA book.

The study was funded by grants from the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, Maryland.