

A glass of apple juice a day goes a long way in keeping the heart doctor away

BY LINDA ASHTON
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

YAKIMA, Wash. (AP) — A glass of apple juice or two a day might help keep the cardiologist away.

In a small, three-month study of 13 healthy women and 12 healthy men, researchers at the University of California at Davis found the heart-health benefits from eating apples similar to those of drinking tea or red wine.

"Whole food is where it's at," nutritionist Dianne Hyson, the lead researcher on the project, said Monday. "People are still looking for pills and easy answers."

The study was paid for with an unrestricted grant from the U.S. Apple Association and the Processed Apple Institute, and the findings were published in the winter edition of the "Journal of Medicinal Food." But the two industry groups had no part in the design of the study, the researchers or the conclusions.

The study showed that apples

and apple juice may help to slow the oxidation, or break down, of "bad" or LDL cholesterol. When LDL cholesterol breaks down, it has a tendency to clog arteries, which can lead to heart disease.

"A very moderate intake of apple juice or apples has the potential to reduce risk factors for heart disease in a fairly short period of time," Hyson said. "These small diet changes might play an important role in a heart-healthy diet."

While the sample was small — 13 women and 12 men — it was determined to be statistically significant, Hyson said. It was an attempt using people to confirm laboratory findings from 1999 that showed apple nutrients inhibited LDL oxidation.

More good news

Last summer, Cornell University researchers reported that apple antioxidants inhibited the growth of certain types of cancer cells. In research published in the journal *Nature*, Cornell researchers reported that apple

components had more antioxidant capabilities than a 1,500-milligram dose of vitamin C.

The UC-Davis findings suggest apples have an antioxidant capability similar to those of tea and red wine.

The average age of the study participants was the early 40s, and their average overall cholesterol level was just above 200 milligrams per deciliter of blood.

The men and women drank either 12 ounces of 100-percent apple juice or ate two apples with the peel daily without changing any other aspect of their diets or exercise routines. The apples consumed were Fuji, Golden Delicious, Granny Smith and Red Delicious.

All members of the group ate apples for six weeks or drank juice for six weeks and then switched.

Researchers measured the time it takes for LDL oxidation to occur. The people who drank apple juice showed a 20 percent increase in the time it takes LDL cholesterol to break down. Eat-

ing apples produced a slightly smaller increase but added the benefits of a 22 percent increase in dietary fiber intake.

Nutritional biochemist Alice H. Lichtenstein, a professor at Tufts University in Boston, said it's still difficult to attribute any specific health effect to a single plant.

"What we know about fruits and vegetables is they are good for you," she said.

Data suggest that people who eat a lot of fruits and vegetables tend to have better health and a lower risk for some forms of cancer, but it's not known if that's because they're eating more fruits and vegetables or eating less of foods that increase health risks.

For years, the U.S. government has recommended that people eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables daily, but despite the easy availability of high-quality food here, they're not doing it, Lichtenstein said.

Source: www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu

Children's health, education focus at Medstart Conference

Tomorrow's health and education professionals will focus on issues facing today's children at a March 17 conference on children's health, education and wellness organized by students at the University of Michigan, including the Medical School and Schools of Public Health, Nursing and Social Work.

"Education: Enriching Minds, Opening Doors, Paving the Path to a Brighter Future" will take place 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, March 17, at Hutchins Hall in the U-M Law Quadrangle. The public, including students and faculty from other Michigan schools and colleges, is invited to join U-M students, faculty and staff at the event.

From alternative education to violence, eating disorders to disabilities, the ninth annual Medstart Conference will offer participants information on a range of issues and problems facing the nation's youngest citizens. It will

also feature keynote addresses by award-winning author Alex Kotlowitz and the mother of late AIDS activist Ryan White.

The morning keynote, given by Kotlowitz, is titled "Breaking the Silence: Growing Up in Today's Inner City." Kotlowitz is a journalist and author of two books: *There Are No Children Here: The Story of Two Boys Growing Up in the Other America*, a 1991 report on young people in the Chicago housing projects, and *The Other Side of the River: A Story of Two Towns, a Death and America's Dilemma*, a 1998 look at race relations in St. Joseph and Benton Harbor, Mich., following the death of a black teen.

The afternoon keynote address will be given by Jeanne White-Ginder, mother of Ryan White, a hemophiliac who died of AIDS in 1990 at the age of 18 after years of public AIDS activism.

White-Ginder, herself an AIDS

activist, will address her son's legacy and the educational discrimination he faced because of his HIV status and illness. Last fall, the federal government reauthorized the Ryan White CARE act, a \$1.8 billion package that funds HIV and AIDS prevention, testing, education and care.

Local and regional experts will lead 15 one-hour workshops throughout the day.

Fees are \$12 for students and \$22 for non-students who pre-register by March 6, and \$17 and \$27, respectively, for those who register after March 6 or at the conference. More information is available at www.umich.edu/~medstart or by calling (734) 214-3887.

Medstart was founded in 1991 by U-M medical students who wanted more training in children's issues in their first years of medical school. It works to expose current and future pro-

fessionals — especially those in medicine, public health, education and law — to children's issues early in their careers.

In addition to the conference, Medstart also coordinates health fairs, offers information about volunteer opportunities, and matches students with pregnant women or hospitalized children for companionship, learning and health education. Its current president is U-M medical student Lisa Chu.

MEDICAL DATEBOOK

ONGOING

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Alcoholics Anonymous meets 8:30-9:30 p.m. Wednesday and Sunday, Garden City Hospital (north entrance), 8254 Inkster Road. Alonson meeting Sunday only. Call (248) 541-8665 or (734) 776-3415. Noon Tuesday and Thursday, Providence Medical Office Center, 39500 W. 10 Mile (at Haggerty), Novi. Call (248) 248-9362. Noon Wednesday, Livonia Mission Health Medical Center, 37555 Seven Mile Road, Livonia. Call (734) 953-1188.

FREE PROSTATE SCREENINGS

Saint Joseph Mercy Hospital will offer free prostate screenings on the fourth Thursday of each month in the radiology oncology department at the McAuley Cancer Care Center in Ypsilanti. Call the Saint Joseph Mercy HealthLine at (800) 231-2211.

ANXIETY DISORDER

Ward Presbyterian Church, corner of Six Mile Road and Haggerty, Northville, sponsors a Panic Attack & Anxiety Disorder Support Group meeting 7 p.m. the first Tuesday of each month. Call (734) 420-8175.

DIABETES

St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Ann Arbor will offer a Diabetes Support group 2:30-3:30 p.m. the first Friday and 7-8:30 p.m. the third Tuesday of each month in the Exhibition Room of the hospital Education Center. Call (734) 712-2804.

LYME DISEASE

The Lyme Disease and Chronic Illness Support Group, Western Wayne County meets the third Tuesday of each month at the First United Methodist Church, 3 Towne Square, Wayne. For more information, call (734) 326-3502.

TOPS

Take off pounds sensibly! TOPS #23 of Michigan meets 6-7 p.m. every Tuesday at Newburg Methodist Church, 36500 Ann Arbor Trail (between Wayne and Newburg), Livonia. Call Marie Bailey at (734) 762-0386.

THRU-MARCH 20

HEALTH SEMINAR

New Life Health Seminars will present "A Quest for a Healthier You," a free seven-session health seminar presented by local medical professionals 7:30-8:45 p.m. Tuesdays at the Summit on the Park, Arts II Room, Canton. Topics include: Diet & Nutrition, Stress Management, Heart Disease, Exercise & Weight Control, Cancer Prevention, and Diabetes. To register, call (734) 844-8660.

SUN, MARCH 11

DEMENTIA AND DEPRESSION

Judy C. Wheeler, a clinic nurse specialist and nurse practitioner-gerontology, will present "Dementia and Depression with Aging" a free workshop 2 p.m. at the Newburg United Methodist Church, 36500 Ann Arbor Trail, Livonia. Pre-register by calling (734) 422-0149.

CHEMICAL SENSITIVITY

MCS Friends, a support group for those who are physically harmed or who have lost someone through death due to chemical exposure, will meet 2-5 p.m. at the Farmington Library, 23500 Liberty Street, Farmington. The public is welcome. Call 248-349-4972.

MARCH 11-14

MEDICINE AND MORALITY

Please see DATEBOOK, D6

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