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New research shows a positive association between higher vitamin C intake and a decreased risk of hypertension among adults.

HIGHER VITAMIN C INTAKES ARE LINKED TO LOWER RISK OF HYPERTENSION

The effect of fruit and vegetable consumption and blood pressure is unclear. A recent article published online in the journal *Hypertension* demonstrates a link between increased levels of vitamin C and a reduced risk of high blood pressure.

English researchers studied a population of 20,926 men and women aged 40 to 79 years who participated in a large European cancer study between 1993 and 1997. Blood pressure, plasma vitamin C and other factors were measured at the initial clinic visit. Questionnaire responses provided information on medical conditions, antihypertensive medication use and vitamin C intake from supplements.

In this study, researchers defined high blood pressure as systolic blood pressure of at least 140 mm Hg. People with high vitamin C concentrations had lower blood pressure. After adjusting for age, sex, body mass index, cholesterol, prevalent medical conditions, smoking, physical activity, alcohol consumption, social class, education, use of vitamin C-containing supplement, and antihypertensive medication, the likelihood of having high blood pressure was 22% lower for those who were in the top 25% of plasma vitamin C levels compared with the group with the lowest levels.

Each increase in plasma vitamin C equivalent to consuming one additional serving of fruit and vegetables daily was related to a 0.9 mm Hg reduction in systolic blood pressure.

The results of this study show a strong association between vitamin C concentration, an indicator of fruit and vegetable consumption, and a lower level of blood pressure. Vitamin C is an important antioxidant which may impact hypertension in part by reducing oxidative stress. The vitamin also acts as a vasodilator by increasing the bioavailability of nitric oxide.

This research provides further evidence for health benefits of dietary patterns with higher fruit and vegetable consumption.

Myint PK et al. Association Between Plasma Vitamin C Concentrations and Blood Pressure in the European Prospective Investigation Into Cancer-Norfolk Population-Based Study.