

Veggies, Soy & Fiber VS Lovastatin. ding-ding. Round 1

Diets high in soy, plant sterols, and certain kinds of fiber may be as effective as the cholesterol-lowering drug lovastatin in reducing LDL (“bad”) cholesterol levels.

In a new study, 34 people were assigned to a functional foods diet, a control diet plus 20 mg of lovastatin per day, or a control diet plus placebo.

The functional foods diet contained fibre from oats, barley, and psyllium; 100 grams of okra every other day; 200 grams of eggplant every other day; soy protein from soy milk and meat substitutes; almonds; and a margarine that provided plant sterols.

The control diet was high in fibre and very low in saturated fat and supplemented with sunflower and safflower oils; egg substitutes and fat-free dairy products provided protein.

After four weeks of each treatment, LDL cholesterol levels decreased by 9% in the control group, 30% in the functional foods group, and 33% in the lovastatin group. Lovastatin and the functional foods diet were equally able to reduce LDL cholesterol.

The overall risk of heart disease was significantly lower in the functional foods and lovastatin groups than in the control group.

Source:

Jenkins DJ, Kendall CW, Marchie A et al. Direct comparison of a dietary portfolio of cholesterol-lowering foods with a statin in hypercholesterolemic participants. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2005;81:380–7.