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Walnuts Improve Artery Flexibility posted 10/17/06

A new study from the *American Journal of Cardiology* shows that adding walnuts (a healthy plant source of omega-3 fatty acid) to a high-fat meal reduces negative changes in arteries. Researchers from Barcelona's Hospital Clinical compared how arteries are affected by five teaspoons of olive oil versus eight walnuts when added to a fatty meal. While both walnuts and olive oil decreased inflammation, walnuts increased the elasticity and flexibility of the arteries (called flow-mediated dilation, or FMD) by 24 percent for those with high cholesterol, and FMD was unchanged in the healthy control group. In comparison, those who consumed olive oil showed a 36 percent and 17 percent decrease in FMD for high-cholesterol and control participants, respectively.

Cortes B, Nunez I, Cofan M, et al. Acute Effects of High-Fat Meals Enriched With Walnuts or Olive Oil on Postprandial Endothelial Function. *J Am Coll Cardiol.* 2006;48:1666-1671.