



Taken from: [www.eatmoreoats.com/health.html](http://www.eatmoreoats.com/health.html)

Eating oats in your diet provides a wide range of important health benefits. New scientific research is also revealing exciting new information about the benefits of oats, some of it surprising.

### **Health Benefits**

#### **Cholesterol and Heart:**

Oatmeal and oat bran are significant sources of dietary fiber. This fiber contains a mixture of about half soluble and half insoluble fibers. One component of the soluble fiber found in oats is beta-glucans, a soluble fiber which has proven effective in lowering blood cholesterol. Here's how it works. Soluble fiber breaks down as it passes through the digestive tract, forming a gel that traps some substances related to cholesterol, such as cholesterol-rich bile acids. This entrapment reduces the absorption of cholesterol into the bloodstream. The bad cholesterol, LDL, is trapped without lowering good cholesterol (HDL). Oats and grains are also one of the best sources of compounds called tocotrienols. These are antioxidants which together with tocopherols form vitamin E. The tocotrienols inhibit cholesterol synthesis and have been found to lower blood cholesterol. The accumulation of cholesterol is implicated in many types of cardiovascular disease. Oats, like all cholesterol-lowering agents, are most effective when consumed as part of a low-fat, high-fiber diet taken together with plenty of exercise. The beneficial health effects of oats are best if  $\frac{1}{2}$ -1 cup ( $1\frac{1}{2}$ -3 ounces) of oats are eaten every day. One study found that the  $\frac{1}{10}$  ounce (3 grams) of soluble fiber from this amount of oatmeal decreased total cholesterol by approximately 2%, which correlates to a 4% decrease in coronary artery disease. Another study showed  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ounces (43 grams) of oatmeal resulted in a loss of 3% in total cholesterol and a 14% reduction in bad cholesterol after two months. Another study found that a 6-8 week diet of  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -3 ounces (43-85 grams) of oat bran daily lowered total cholesterol



by 20% and bad cholesterol (LDL) by as much as 25%. Another study found 3.5 ounces (100 grams) of oat bran (one-third of a cup of oat bran eaten twice a day) lowered cholesterol up to 15%. New research has also discovered that the antioxidants found in oats reduce cholesterol by reducing the ability of blood cells to stick to the inside of artery walls. So in other words, eat a cup of oats a day and you'll be okay!

### **Blood Sugars:**

Eating oats can spread the rise in blood sugars over a longer time period. Control of blood glucose and insulin levels is essential in preventing many of the complications associated with diabetes. Oat beta-glucan slows the rise in blood glucose levels following a meal and delays its decline to pre-meal levels. Here's how it works. As the beta-glucan in the soluble fiber of oats is digested, it forms a gel, which causes the viscosity of the contents of the stomach and small intestine to be increased. This in turn slows down digestion and prolongs the absorption of carbohydrates into the bloodstream. This means dramatic changes in blood sugar levels are avoided. Other sources of soluble fiber are grains, fresh fruit and vegetables.

### **Anti-Cancer:**

Oats, like other grains and vegetables, contain hundreds of phytochemicals (plant chemicals). Many phytochemicals are thought to reduce a person's risk of getting cancer. Phytoestrogen compounds, called lignans, in oats have been linked to decreased risk of hormone-related diseases such as breast cancer. Most of the research has been focused on breast cancer, but similar effects are expected on other hormone-related cancers such as prostate, endometrium and ovarian cancer. International research has shown that women with a higher intake of dietary fiber have lower circulating oestrogen levels, a factor associated with a lower risk of breast cancer. The insoluble fibers in oats are also thought to reduce carcinogens in the gastrointestinal tract.

### **Blood Pressure:**

A daily serving of whole oats rich in soluble fiber can reduce hypertension, or high blood pressure, and so reduce the need for anti-hypertensive medication. Nearly 1 in 3 American adults has high blood pressure. It usually has no symptoms, but can cause serious problems with the heart and blood vessels, leading to other complications.

### **Bowel Function:**

Oats have a high fiber content. Fiber is necessary in keeping bowel movements regular. Oats are high in both soluble and insoluble fiber. Insoluble fiber does not dissolve in water. It is spongy and absorbs many times its own weight of liquid. It makes stools heavier and speeds their passage through the gut, relieving constipation.

### **Weight Control:**

As the soluble fiber of oats is digested, it forms a gel, which causes the viscosity of the contents of the stomach and small intestine to be increased. The gel delays stomach emptying making you feel full longer which helps with weight loss. New research suggests that children between ages 2-18 years old who have a constant intake of oatmeal lowered their risk of obesity. The research found that the children who ate oatmeal were 50% less likely to become overweight, when compared to those children that did not eat it.



### **Athletic Performance:**

Oats, like other cereal grains, are valued primarily as a source of carbohydrates which provide calories for energy needs. Oats have been shown in scientific studies to favorably alter metabolism and enhance performance when ingested 45 minutes to 1 hour before exercise of moderate intensity. This website's author swears by them!

### **General Health and Longevity:**

Oats have a higher concentration of well-balanced protein than other cereals. Oats contain phytochemicals (plant chemicals) which have been associated with protection from chronic disease such as cancer. They contain a good balance of essential fatty acids, which have been linked with longevity and general good health, and also have one of the best amino acid profiles of any grain. Amino acids are essential proteins that help facilitate optimum functioning of the body. Oats are a good source of essential vitamins such as thiamin, folic acid, biotin, pantothenic acid and vitamin E. They also contain zinc, selenium, copper, iron, manganese and magnesium. Oat beta glucan also appears to help speed up response to infection, which may result in faster healing. According to a new study, it was discovered that beta glucan can enhance the ability of certain human immune cells to navigate to the site of a bacterial infection, resulting in faster healing. So don't delay and start eating more oats today!