

VITAMIN K₂ COULD PREVENT CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

The benefits of vitamin K for cardiovascular disease gained attention by the findings of a Dutch study called the “Rotterdam study” (Geleijnse et al)¹ examining heart health benefits of dietary Vitamin K and their role in preventing Coronary Heart Disease (CHD) in 2004. The study, which involved over 4,800 people over a ten year period, revealed that increased dietary intake of specifically vitamin K₂ significantly reduced the risk of CHD mortality by 50 percent as compared to low dietary vitamin K₂ intake. In this study, vitamin K₁ had no effect at all.

These exciting results were confirmed in an experimental animal model in which rats received a diet exhausting their vitamin K stores, resulting in inactive vitamin K-dependent proteins leading to the major calcification of their arteries. Vitamin K₂ was capable of completely inhibiting arterial calcification, whereas also in this study vitamin K₁ (even in very high doses) had no effect at all.

Now, new clinical research carried out by researchers at the University of Maastricht revealed that vitamin K₂ can stop the calcification of the arteries and may actually even reverse it (Schurgers et al). The new study was published in April 2007 in the American Hematology Society journal *Blood*.²

According to lead author Dr. Leon Schurgers, “Arterial calcification is major and independent risk factor for cardiovascular mortality. This new study found that in rats with existing arterial calcifications the total amount of aortic calcium decreased by 37 percent in six weeks during a high vitamin K₂ diet.”

Dr. Schurgers continued, “These latest findings on the role of vitamin K₂ intake are an exciting development for the treatment of cardiovascular diseases, as our trial showed that vitamin K₂ supplementation was capable of reversing the effects of arterial calcification.”

Vitamin K₂ activates the vitamin K-dependent Matrix Gla-Protein (MGP), which plays an important role in preventing calcium from depositing in the arteries. A second study in humans, also in the April edition of *Blood*, carried out by the

group of Dr. Schurgers at the University of Maastricht confirms that natural vitamin K₂ as Menaquinone 7, or (MK-7) is the most effective form of vitamin K due to its long chain structure, which results in a very long half-life of three days, much longer than any other vitamin K (Schurgers et al).³

The half life of the short chain vitamin K₂ (MK-4), for example, is just one hour. Natural vitamin K₂ is found in fermented foods like cheese and curd and in particularly high levels in the Japanese food called

natto. Natto is a fermented soy bean food traditionally eaten for over 1000 years in Japan

Vitamin K₂ as MK-7 is now available in a dietary supplement called MenaQ7™, derived from Japanese natto. For more information visit the Web site www.MenaQ7.com.

For references go to *totalhealthmagazine.com* and click on references and search for 30-1-15.

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