

# Nutrition News

Department of Human Nutrition



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## Cinnamon Not Helpful in Control of Diabetes or Blood Fats

It seemed like a little spice was both healthy AND nice. However, as research continues on cinnamon, some of its health benefits are now in doubt.

Cinnamon does not appear to help control type 1 or type 2 diabetes or blood fats, according to a 2008 report that analyzed previously-reported studies. No improvement was found for fasting glucose (sugar) or hemoglobin A1C levels. Blood fats, including cholesterol (total, LDL or HDL) and triglyceride levels, did not change either. People in the study took cinnamon supplements daily for up to four months.

Preliminary research published in 2003 had suggested that a small amount of cinnamon taken each day by people with diabetes helps lower blood sugar levels. But conflicting results were found in small clinical trials published between 2005 and 2007. For the new report, scientists combined the results of five small, previously-published, randomized and placebo-controlled clinical studies. This process, called meta-analysis, allowed the researchers to determine more accurately the impact of taking a daily cinnamon supplement.

Taking cinnamon was not associated with clinically significant, or statistically

significant, changes in blood levels compared to taking a placebo.

The new study included results from 282 people with diabetes (type 1 or type 2) who received one to six grams (which is equivalent to about 1/2 to 3 teaspoons) of cinnamon, or a placebo, each day. Most subjects were treated and followed for 12 weeks, with a range of 6 to 16 weeks.

For now, cinnamon remains on the shelf for use as a tasty addition to many foods and as an antimicrobial agent. As for the most inexpensive way to lower blood sugars, cholesterol and triglycerides? Be physically active.

Source: WL Baker, G Gutierrez-Williams, CM White, J Kluger CI Coleman. 2008. Effect of cinnamon on glucose control and lipid parameters. *Diabetes Care* 31:41-43.

For more information about healthy eating, contact your local extension office.

The Food Assistance Program can help people of all ages with low income buy nutritious foods for a better diet.

To find out more, call toll-free 1-888-369-4777.

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In each case, credit Mary Meck Higgins, Ph.D., R.D., L.D., CDE, Associate Professor, Department of Human Nutrition; Kansas State University; *Cinnamon Not Helpful in Control of Diabetes or Blood Fats*; January 2008.

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