

Apple juice, bananas may lower childhood asthma

By Stephen Daniells

29/05/2007 - **Increased consumption of apple juice or bananas may prevent childhood asthma, says new research from England that adds to an ever-growing body of science linking easy breathing to apples.**

Researchers, led by Peter Burnley from the National Heart Group & Lung Institute at Imperial College, performed a population-based survey of 2,640 children aged between five and ten and found that regular consumption of apple juice was associated with a 47 per cent reduction in wheezing.

"We found no association between eating fresh [apples](#) and [asthma](#) symptoms in this population, but found some evidence to suggest that a higher consumption of apple juice from concentrate, and [bananas](#), may protect against wheezing in children," wrote the authors in the European Respiratory Journal.

According to the European Federation of Allergy and Airway Diseases Patients Association (EFA), over 30m Europeans suffer from asthma, costing Europe €17.7bn every year. The cost due to lost productivity is estimated to be around €9.8bn.

The condition is on the rise in the Western world and the most common long-term condition in the UK today

According to the American Lung Association, almost 20m Americans suffer from asthma. The condition is reported to be responsible for over 14m lost school days in children, while the annual economic cost of asthma is said to be over \$16.1bn.

Burney and co-workers used questionnaires to calculate the potential benefits of fruit consumption against wheezing and asthma in the children. At least one banana every day was associated with a 34 per cent reduction in current wheezing, compared to eating bananas less than once a month.

One glass of apple juice from concentrate a day or more was associated with a 47 per cent reduction in current wheezing, said the researchers.

Consumption of apples, other fruits and orange juice however was not linked with asthma symptoms, they added.

Commenting independently on the research, Dr Mike Thomas, a researcher for British charity Asthma UK based at the University of Aberdeen, is quoted by the BBC as saying that the study was further evidence of the protective effect of apples.

"There is some evidence that a healthy diet rich in anti-oxidants and vitamins is good for asthma," he said.

"It is yet another reason why we should be encouraging a healthy diet."

This study appears to support a growing body of science that has linked antioxidant intake, particularly vitamins C and E, to the incidence of asthma, a condition on the rise in the Western world and the most common long-term condition in the UK today.

Source: *European Respiratory Journal*

Published on-line ahead of print, doi: 10.1183/09031936.00097806

"Childhood asthma and fruit consumption in South London"

Authors: B.J. Okoko, P.G. Burney, R. Newson, J. Potts, S.O. Shaheen