



Study Finds Oats Helps to Improve Blood Pressure, Cuts Drug Costs

(NAPSA)—With one in five American adults on medication for hypertension, a new clinical study finds that eating oatmeal and other whole-grain oat cereal can reduce blood pressure levels meaningfully—and lower drug-prescription expenses by millions of dollars annually.

The study, published in a recent issue of the scientific journal *Preventive Medicine in Managed Care*, indicates that 73 percent of participants who ate oat cereal daily for 12 weeks were able to reduce or eliminate their blood-pressure medication at an average annual cost of savings of \$197.63 per patient. Only 42 percent of a control group—fed low-fiber cereals but with minimal beta glucan, the soluble fiber found in oats—reduced or eliminated their blood-pressure medication. This is one of the first studies to quantify the cost savings of prescription drugs when using a dietary approach to combating high blood pressure.

“According to our findings, a diet containing soluble fiber-rich whole-grain, oat-based cereals can reduce significantly the need for medicine to control hypertension and improves blood-pressure control among people being treated for high blood pressure,” said Joseph M. Keenan, M.D., interim chair of the University of Minnesota’s Department of Family Practice & Community Health and an author of the study along with five colleagues.

When extrapolated to the population of enrollees in the study alone—adults being treated for moderate hypertension—the prescription-drug savings are estimated to be nearly \$18.5 million a year. That savings doesn’t factor indirect costs, including the fewer



office visits, other drug-related complications and reduced monitoring costs, among others. When those factors are included, the savings would climb substantially.

Why do oats help reduce blood pressure? Dr. Keenan says the exact mechanism isn’t fully understood, but adds that oats’ total and soluble fiber, mineral content and grain antioxidants may contribute to the favorable blood-pressure results, “possibly via an improvement in insulin sensitivity.” He also noted that consumption of high-fiber cereals, as used by the test group, “is an easy and simple way for a person to increase total and soluble fiber intakes, thus helping to reach the dietary fiber goal of 25 to 30 grams a day.”

Quaker Oats is a leader in helping Americans reduce their risk of heart disease and has supported research in this area for nearly 40 years. The company uses nutrition as a road map to help people take control of their health through a nutritious and delicious diet. To learn more about the role of Quaker Oatmeal in a heart-healthy diet, log on to www.quakeroatmeal.com.

----- ✂ -----
NOTE TO EDITORS:

* Additional information is available exclusively to media at <http://medianet.quakeroats.com>.