

Whole-Grain Cereal Cuts Heart Failure Risk

BY MITCHEL L. ZOLER
Philadelphia Bureau

ORLANDO — Regularly eating a bowl of whole-grain cereal was linked to a significant drop in the risk of heart failure in a study with more than 20,000 men.

"Whole-grain cereal may help prevent" heart failure, Dr. Luc Djoussé said at a conference on cardiovascular disease epidemiology and prevention sponsored by the American Heart Association.

The apparent benefit probably isn't confined to breakfast cereal but includes whole-grain bread, pasta, and rice, said Dr. Djoussé, a physician and epidemiologist at Harvard University and Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. Regular consumption of whole grains probably cuts the risk for heart failure by supplying fiber, nutrients, and phytoestrogens, he added.

"To our knowledge, no prior reported study looked at the impact of breakfast cereals on heart failure risk in a large cohort," Dr. Djoussé said.

The study used data collected prospectively from 21,410 men who participated in the Physicians' Health Study. Their average age at entry was 54 years (range, 40-86 years). The analysis excluded men with heart failure at the start of the study, and those who failed to provide information on their consumption of breakfast cereal. Diet data were collected regularly during up to 24 years of follow-up. Whole-grain breakfast cereal was defined as a formulation that contained at least 25% oats or bran.

Over an average follow-up of 19.6 years, 1,018 men developed heart failure. The risk of heart failure was correlated with the frequency of eating whole-grain breakfast cereal. The men were divided into four categories of consumption: none (33%); one or fewer servings per week but more than none (23%); two to six servings per week (24%); and seven or more servings per week (19%).

In an analysis that controlled for baseline levels of potential confounders—including age, body mass index, smoking history, alcohol use, multivitamin use, diabetes, hypertension, and valvular heart disease—men who ate seven or more servings of whole-grain cereal a week had about a 30% reduced risk of developing heart failure, compared with men who did not eat whole-grain cereal. Men who ate

two to six servings a week had about a 20% reduced risk. Both of these differences were statistically significant. No significant change was seen in men who ate one serving a week or less, and no link was seen between the consumption of refined breakfast cereals and heart failure risk.

The study did not receive any commercial funding. ■

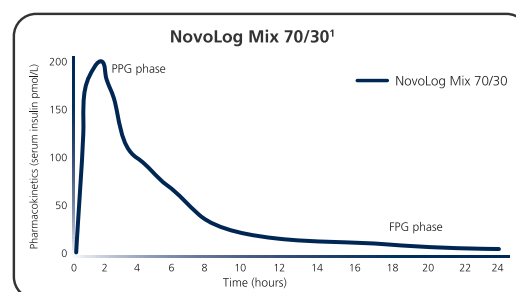


Regular consumption of whole-grain cereal may help lower the risk of heart failure in men, a large study suggests.

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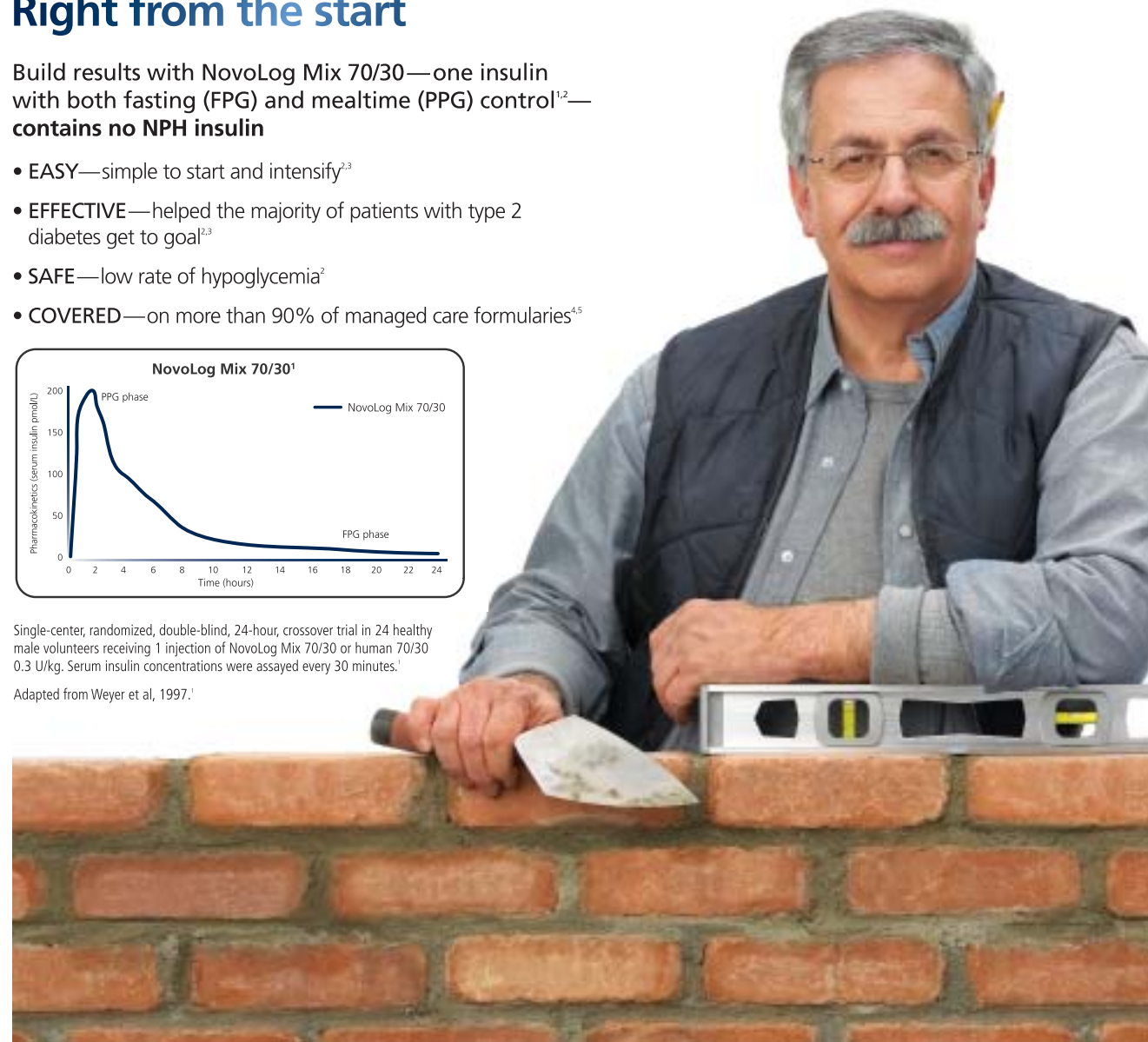
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Adapted from Weyer et al, 1997.¹



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April 2007



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