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Pilot study connects daily almond consumption with face wrinkles

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By **Manbeena Chawla** | October 9, 2019



pilot-study-connects-daily-almond-consumption-with-face-wrinkles

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New research using high-resolution imaging shows reduced measures of wrinkle width and severity in postmenopausal women who ate almonds as a daily snack

Anti-aging regimens abound but emerging research suggests that one delicious addition to your skincare routine may be in your pantry instead of your makeup kit: almonds.

A new pilot study by researchers at the University of California, Davis found that a daily snack of almonds in place of other nut-free snacks improved measures of wrinkle width and severity in postmenopausal women. The study was funded by the Almond Board of California and is the first of its kind to examine almonds' effects on skin health. A larger and longer-term follow-up study is underway.

In this 16-week randomized controlled trial, 28 healthy postmenopausal women with Fitzpatrick skin type 1 or 2 (characterized by increased tendency to burn with sun exposure) were randomly assigned to one of two groups. In the intervention group, women ate almonds as a snack, which accounted for 20% of their total daily calorie intake, or 340 calories per day on average (60 grams). The control group ate a nut-free snack that also accounted for 20% of calories: a cereal bar, granola bar or pretzels. Aside from these snacks, study participants ate their regular diets and did not eat any nuts or nut-containing products.

Skin assessments were made at the start of the study, and again at 4 weeks, 8 weeks, 12 weeks and 16 weeks. At each visit, facial wrinkles were assessed using high-resolution facial imaging and validated 3-D facial modeling and measurement. "These high resolution cameras allow for 3-D reconstruction of any wrinkles so that they can be mapped for their key characteristics of width and severity. The severity score is a calculation of the depth and length of a wrinkle," explains Raja Sivamani, MD MS AP, integrative dermatologist and lead researcher on the study. Skin barrier function was also assessed, by measuring sebum production and transepidermal water loss (TEWL). Skin barrier function examines the strength of the skin barrier and how well it protects skin from moisture loss (TEWL) and from harmful irritants coming from the environment.

By the end of the study at 16 weeks, photographic image analysis showed statistically significant improvements for participants in the almond snack group compared to the control group ($P<0.02$):

- Wrinkle width decreased by 10%
- Wrinkle severity decreased by 9%

There were no significant changes in skin barrier function between groups.

“Food as a means of promoting skin health – the “health from the inside out” idea – is of growing interest to those looking for options for healthy aging,” says Dr. Sivamani. “It’s also a growing area of scientific research. Almonds are a rich source of antioxidant vitamin E and deliver essential fatty acids and polyphenols. They’re a smart choice for overall good nutrition. And, as seen in this study, almonds may hold promise as a food to include as part of a healthy aging diet, especially for post-menopausal women.”

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