



# NATURE CURES...HEALTH NEWS

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## Research Article: Vitamin C and Heart Failure

American Heart Association's Scientific Sessions 2011, found that adequate intake of vitamin C was associated with longer survival in patients with heart failure.

Heart failure is a common and often deadly condition that results when the heart can't pump an adequate amount of oxygen and nutrient rich blood through the body.

In a new study headed by Dr. Song, (College of Medicine, University of Ulsan in Korea) the researchers worked with 212 patients with an average age of 61. Approximately 45 percent of the participants had moderate to severe heart failure.

**When the scientists tested their vitamin C levels, they found that heart failure patients with low levels of the vitamin had the highest levels of high sensitivity C-Reactive protein (hsCRP), a marker for inflammation and a risk factor for heart disease. Those with lower vitamin C levels in the body also had more major cardiac events and higher death rates.**

**Low vitamin C levels linked to higher death rate**  
Specifically, heart failure patients in the study who had low vitamin C intake were 2.4 times more likely to have higher levels of hsCRP compared to patients

with higher levels of the vitamin. Study participants with low vitamin C intake and hsCRP over 3 milligrams per litre (mg/L) were also about twice as likely to die from heart disease within one year of follow-up.

"Increased levels of high-sensitivity C-reactive protein means a worsening of heart failure," Dr. Song explained. "An adequate level of vitamin C is associated with lower levels of high-sensitivity C-reactive protein. This results in a longer cardiac event-free survival in patients."

It turns out heart failure patients may be at increased risk of too little vitamin C because they are regularly prescribed diuretic drugs to help the body get rid of excess fluid. Vitamin C is water soluble and diuretics, also known as "water pills", increase the amount of water excreted from the kidneys which also takes C out of the body.

**So what is it about vitamin C that appears to be extremely advantageous to people with heart failure? Dr. Song and colleagues pointed out that inflammation seems to play an important role in heart failure and a lack of vitamin C could contribute to that problem. On the other hand, taking in adequate vitamin C appears to significantly lessen inflammation.**

