

STOMACH

Japanese apricots reported to inhibit inflammation and gastritis progression related to *Helicobacter pylori* infection

The consumption of ≥ 3 Japanese apricots daily has an inhibitory effect on mucosal inflammation of the stomach and chronic atrophic gastritis (CAG) progression in individuals with *Helicobacter pylori* infection, report Shotaro Enomoto and colleagues in a recent study from Japan.

“In Japan, the most important issue in gastric cancer prevention is [eradicating] *H. pylori* infection, which is the major



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etiological factor...” explains Enomoto. An experimental study which reported that Japanese apricots had anti-*H. pylori* properties led Enomoto and colleagues to investigate the effects of these fruits in gastrointestinal disorders.

Enomoto *et al.*'s study included 1,358 asymptomatic individuals who were participants of a government health program. Prevalence of *H. pylori* infection was determined by serum antibody titer, and dietary consumption of Japanese apricot was assessed by a self-administered questionnaire. Individuals were categorized into two groups according to their daily intake of the fruit: low (< 3) and high (≥ 3). Gastric mucosa samples were analyzed in 68 patients with *H. pylori*-related CAG. The relationship between Japanese apricot intake and severity of *H. pylori*-related CAG was investigated.

Among individuals infected with *H. pylori*, serum antibody titers were significantly lower in the high intake

group. In patients with *H. pylori*-related CAG, reduced *H. pylori* bacterial load and mononuclear infiltration was shown in the high intake group. Moreover, antral neutrophil infiltration was significantly reduced and corporal atrophy was less extensive in this group.

“Our findings strongly suggest that Japanese apricot has an inhibitory effect on *H. pylori*-related active inflammation of the stomach and progression of CAG,” says Enomoto. “It is highly probable that a high intake of Japanese apricots may be an effective strategy for the prevention of gastric cancer, and an ideal alternative to *H. pylori* eradication therapy.”

Rachel Jones

Original article Enomoto, S. *et al.* Inhibitory effects of Japanese apricot (*Prunus mume* Siebold et Zucc.; *Ume*) on *Helicobacter pylori*-related chronic gastritis. *Eur. J. Clin. Nutr.* **64**, 714–719 (2010)