

## Can Patients with Diverticular Disease Eat Nuts, Corn and Popcorn?

Lisa L Strate<sup>1,2</sup>, Yan L Liu<sup>3</sup>, Sapna Syngal<sup>4,5</sup>, Edward L Giovannucci<sup>3,4</sup>

1. University of Washington School of Medicine, Seattle, WA, USA, 2. Harborview Medical Center, Seattle, WA, USA, 3. Harvard School of Public Health, Boston, MA, USA, 4. Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, MA, USA, 5. Dana Farber Cancer Institute, Boston, MA, USA

**BACKGROUND AND AIM:** Patients with diverticular disease are frequently advised to avoid nuts and seeds; however, there is no evidence to support this recommendation. The aim of this study was to evaluate prospectively whether nut, corn and popcorn consumption are associated with complications of diverticular disease. **METHODS:** Subjects included 47,454 US males in the Health Professionals Follow-up Study cohort who were aged 40-75 years at baseline and free of diverticular disease, gastrointestinal cancer and inflammatory bowel disease in 1986. Men reporting newly diagnosed diverticulosis or diverticular complications on biennial follow-up questionnaires were sent supplemental questionnaires outlining details of diagnosis and treatment. Recent nut, corn and popcorn consumption were ascertained from a validated 131-item semiquantitative food frequency questionnaire mailed to all participants every 4 years. Study endpoints included diverticular bleeding, symptomatic uncomplicated diverticular disease and diverticulitis. Cox proportional hazards regression was used to adjust for age, study year, body mass index, dietary fat, fiber, and red meat, physical activity, and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory and acetaminophen use. **RESULTS:** During 18 years of follow-up (732,111 person-years), 445 incident cases of diverticular bleeding, 651 incident cases of symptomatic uncomplicated diverticular disease, and 865 incident cases of diverticulitis were identified. For diverticular bleeding and symptomatic uncomplicated diverticulosis, no multivariable associations were observed for consumption of nuts, corn, popcorn, or combined consumption of the three. For diverticulitis, no associations were found for nut, corn, or combined nut, corn and popcorn consumption. However, popcorn consumption alone appeared to be protective. After adjustment for other known or potential risk factors for diverticular complications, men with the highest popcorn intake (at least 2 times per week) had a hazards ratio of 0.71 (95% CI 0.56-0.90; P for trend 0.18) when compared to men with the lowest popcorn intake (less than once per month). **CONCLUSION:** Data from this large, prospective cohort indicate that nut and corn consumption do not increase the risk of diverticular complications. In fact, frequent popcorn consumption was associated with a reduced risk of diverticulitis.