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New, First-of-its-Kind Study Shows Routine Consumption of California Raisins May Significantly Lower Blood Pressure

FRESNO, Calif., March 29, 2012 — New research announced at the American College of Cardiology's 61st Annual Scientific Session suggests eating California Raisins three times a day may significantly lower blood pressure among individuals with slightly higher than normal blood pressure, otherwise known as prehypertension. The study was conducted at the Louisville Metabolic and Atherosclerosis Center (L-MARC) by lead researcher, Harold Bays, MD, medical director and president of L-MARC.

"Raisins have intrinsic properties that could support heart and vascular health; however, we believe this is the first controlled study to specifically and scientifically support raisins' blood pressure-lowering effects compared to other snacks," said Dr. Bays.

The study was conducted among 46 men and women with prehypertension. Participants were randomly assigned to snack on raisins or pre-packaged commercial snacks that did not contain raisins or other fruits or vegetables, three times a day for 12 weeks. Findings include:

Data analyses reveal that compared to other popular snacks, raisins significantly reduce systolic blood pressure at weeks four, eight, and 12, ranging from -4.8 to -7.2% or -6.0 to -10.2 mmHg (p values <0.05).

- Within group analysis demonstrates that raisins significantly reduce mean diastolic blood pressure at all study visits, with changes ranging from -2.4 to -5.2 mmHg (p values <0.05).
- Pre-packaged snacks (including crackers and cookies) did not significantly reduce systolic or diastolic blood pressure at any study visit.

"Overall, these findings support what many people intrinsically believe; natural foods often have greater benefits than processed foods," said Dr. Bays.

The study was funded by the California Raisin Marketing Board through a grant to the L-MARC Research Center in Louisville, Kentucky.

"Raisins deliver dietary fiber and beneficial nutrients like potassium and antioxidants associated with cardio-protective benefits, such as reduced blood pressure – as shown in this new research," said James Painter, Ph.D., R.D., and nutrition research advisor for the California Raisin Marketing Board. "These findings add to the growing body of scientific evidence that indicates there may be numerous, positive health benefits linked to raisin consumption."

Visit www.loveyourraisins.com for further information and summaries of California Raisins nutrition research.

About the California Raisin Marketing Board

A State Marketing Order in 1998 created the California Raisin Marketing Board and it is 100-percent grower funded. Its mission is to support and promote the increased use of California-grown raisins and sponsor crop production, nutrition and market research. For more information about the California Raisin Marketing Board and to browse delicious recipes, visit www.loveyourraisins.com.

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