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# Exotic Fruit Extract May Shed Pounds, Lower Cholesterol

Tuesday, March 24, 2009  
REUTERS

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**NEW YORK —** An extract derived from a West African fruit may help [overweight people shed pounds and lower their cholesterol](#), a new study suggests.

The extract comes from *Irvingia gabonensis*, also known as African mango, a fruit commonly eaten in West Africa. Lab research has shown that extracts from the plant's seed may inhibit body fat production, through effects on certain genes and enzymes that regulate metabolism.

For the current study, researchers at the University of Yaounde in Cameroon randomly assigned 102 overweight adults to take either the plant extract or a placebo twice a day for 10 weeks. The study participants did not follow any special [diet](#) and were told to maintain their normal exercise levels.

By the end of the study, the extract group had lost a significant amount of weight — an average of roughly 28 pounds — while the placebo group showed almost no change.

At the same time, they showed declines in "bad" LDL cholesterol and blood sugar levels.

Dr. Julius E. Oben and his colleagues report the findings in the online journal *Lipids in Health and Disease*. The Fairfield, California-based Gateway Health Alliances, Inc. supplied the *Irvingia gabonensis* extract and partially funded the research.

The study is the first well-controlled clinical trial of the extract's effectiveness as a weight-loss aid, the researchers note. But the findings, they write, suggest that *Irvingia gabonensis* could offer a "useful tool" for battling the growing worldwide problem of obesity and its related ills.

A few patients on the extract reported side effects, including headaches, sleep problems and gas, but the rates were similar in the placebo group.

The findings, Oben's team concludes, should "provide impetus for much larger clinical studies."

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