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Add a bergamot to your five a day

By **Jo Willey** Health Correspondent

AN Italian fruit could be key to beating cholesterol, according to research.

Scientists have found that the Calabrian citrus bergamot reduces "bad" cholesterol and improves "good" cholesterol. It is claimed it can even help patients taking heart pills to slash their dose.

Research led by the University Magna Graecia in southern Italy and published in the International Journal of Cardiology, showed that the fruit could significantly help the eight million Britons who take cholesterol-busting drugs.

It could also offer an effective alternative for people unable to tolerate statins, which have been hailed as a wonder drug for reducing cholesterol, the fat-like substance that furs up arteries, triggering heart attacks and strokes.

Trials in Italy on 237 patients showed that after 30 days using the fruit, total cholesterol levels were reduced by 38 per cent.

Citrus bergamot has a distinctive aroma and is used in Earl Grey tea and perfumes. It tastes bitter but its extract is available as a tablet, launched today. BergaMet, which should be taken once a day before a large meal, costs £42 for a month's supply and is available from www.bergamet.co.uk.