

A Few Facts About Nuts

Eating nuts can reduce your risk of coronary heart disease.

- In a study of 31,208 people, those who ate nuts 1 to 4 times per week had a 25% reduced risk of coronary heart disease compared to those who seldom ate nuts. Those who ate nuts 5 or more times weekly had a 50% decreased risk of heart disease.
- In a study of African Americans, frequent consumers of nuts had a 44% lower mortality rate than those persons who ate nuts infrequently.
- The Nurses' Health Study looked at nut intake in 86,016 women. After adjusting for other risk factors for heart disease, women who ate nuts five or more times weekly had a 39% lower risk of dying from heart disease compared to women who ate nuts less than once per month.
- In the Iowa Women's Health Study, women with the highest nut intake had 60% the risk of coronary heart disease of women who seldom or never ate nuts.
- Clinical research has demonstrated that nuts can lower blood cholesterol (LDL) levels by 8% to 16% while preserving protective HDL levels. Almonds, pecans, peanuts, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pistachios and walnuts have all been shown to help lower LDL cholesterol levels. Research participants did not have a corresponding weight increase in spite of the increased nut consumption.

Nuts help prevent diabetes.

- People who regularly eat nuts have less diabetes—29% less in the Nurses' Health Study.
- Nut butters, such as peanut or almond butter, can also help reduce the risk of diabetes.

Nuts are high in nutrients.

- Nuts are good sources of antioxidants such as vitamin E, flavonoids, and tocotrienols, which help keep LDL cholesterol in the blood from oxidizing and depositing in the arteries.
- Nuts are high in fiber, which helps keep the intestine and heart healthy.
- Nuts are high in folic acid, which helps prevent both cancer and heart disease.
- Walnuts are very high in omega 3 fatty acids, which help protect the heart.
- Nuts are cholesterol free and high in mono and unsaturated fats that protect heart health.
- If nuts are used in place of meat, cheese, and other high-fat foods in the diet, they have not been shown to cause an increase in body weight.

Tips on how to include more nuts in your diet.

- Add nuts to cookies and baked goods.
- Sprinkle nuts on top of casseroles and sautéed or stir fried vegetables.
- Add nuts, along with chopped dried fruit, to grains for breakfast cereal or a pilaf.
- Sprinkle nuts on top of applesauce and fruit salads.
- Use nut butters (almond butter or peanut butter) in place of margarine.
- Include nuts, especially walnuts or pecans, in spinach salad with sliced strawberries or other fruit and a sweet dressing for a special salad.
- Try to eat a serving (1 oz.) of nuts daily for best health. One ounce equals: 24 almonds, 8 Brazil nuts, 18 cashews, 20 hazelnuts, 11 macadamia nuts, 35 peanuts, 47 pistachios, or 14 walnut halves.
- Toast nuts to bring out their flavor. To toast nuts, put them in a single layer on a cookie sheet and bake for about 5 minutes at 300–350 degrees. Stir once or twice to prevent burning.

Source: Loma Linda University Nutrition and Health Letter, August 2004.

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