

Going nuts for good health

Almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, chestnuts, hazelnuts, macadamias, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios and walnuts are all nuts that are packed full of beneficial nutrients for good health. Enjoying nuts regularly as part of a healthy diet has been shown to contribute to heart health¹⁻⁴ reduce overall mortality⁵ and may reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes⁶⁻⁸ and help with weight management.⁹ Nuts naturally contain a broad range of important vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and other phytochemicals helping you achieve a balanced diet.¹⁰

Eat nuts regularly

Health authorities around the world recommend eating more plant foods for good health. This is because plant foods such as fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, grains, nuts and seeds help reduce the risk of developing many of the common lifestyle related issues seen today, such as heart disease,¹⁻⁵ diabetes⁶⁻⁸ and obesity.^{9, 10} The traditional Mediterranean way of eating, which includes plenty of plant foods such as nuts, is considered to be one of the healthiest in the world.¹¹

Why should nuts be part of a healthy daily diet?

Healthy fats Just because nuts are high in fat doesn't mean they are unhealthy. Nuts are a great source of both good fats – monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats¹² – which are essential for regulating blood cholesterol.¹³

- Nuts higher in monounsaturated fats include macadamias, as well as almonds, cashews, hazelnuts, pistachios, and pecans.¹²
- Nuts higher in polyunsaturated fats include walnuts, pine nuts and Brazil nuts.¹²
- Chestnuts are more like a grain than a nut they are low in total fat and rich in low GI carbohydrates.¹²

Fibre All nuts contribute fibre to the diet¹² and eating foods rich in fibre, especially soluble fibre, helps to satisfy hunger for longer.¹⁴ Dietary fibre helps to lower blood cholesterol^{15, 16} and is essential for healthy bowel function.

Protein Nuts are a source of plant protein, particularly for vegetarians, providing approximately 10–20g of protein per 100g.¹²

Vitamin E is an antioxidant that helps protect tissues in the body from damage.¹⁷ An average 30g serve of mixed nuts provides ~20% of the recommended daily requirements for adults.¹²

Folate is a B vitamin associated with heart health.^{18, 19} Hazelnuts, chestnuts, pistachios and walnuts contain folate.¹²

Magnesium is a mineral essential for good nerve and muscle function, strong bones²⁰ and may reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes.^{21, 22} An average 30g serve of almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamias, pecans, pine nuts or walnuts are a source of magnesium.¹²

Zinc is needed for many processes in the body including a strong immune system, and healing and protecting the skin.²³ Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamias, pecans and pine nuts all contain zinc.¹²

Selenium is essential for a well functioning immune system and thyroid gland. In addition it's an antioxidant which may reduce heart disease risk.^{24, 25} Brazil nuts are particularly rich in selenium with just two Brazil nuts providing 100% of an adult's daily selenium requirements.¹²

Other natural phytochemicals

Antioxidants Nuts contain a wide variety of antioxidants, including vitamin E, selenium, copper, manganese plus other phytochemicals such as flavonoids, resveratrol and ellagic acid.²⁶⁻²⁹ These help protect the body from a range of lifestyle related diseases. Similar to fruits and vegetables, the specific content of plant compounds varies from nut to nut – so eating a variety of nuts is key.

Arginine is an amino acid or building block of protein that helps keep blood vessels healthy.^{30, 31} Nuts contain arginine and it may contribute to their heart healthy properties.

Plant sterols Tree nuts contain plant sterols, substances that reduce cholesterol reabsorption from the intestine.³² Pistachios, cashews, almonds and pecans provide plant sterols.¹²

Tips for including nuts daily

Use the following ideas to enjoy nuts in your daily diet:

- Sprinkle almonds or cashews through a stir fry or curry.
- Roast chestnuts or pine nuts and toss them in to a salad.
- Chop walnuts or pecans and add them to a dip.
- Crumble macadamia nuts or pistachios onto grilled fish.
- Add roasted pine nuts to your favourite pasta dish
- Make a great pesto by blending pistachios, cashews, Brazils or macadamias with fresh herbs, garlic, parmesan and a little olive oil.
- Crumble pecans, hazelnuts or walnuts into a yoghurt and serve with fruit.

For further information on the nutritional benefits of nuts and for recipes visit

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Go Nuts for Health.



Going nuts for good health



Reduce your risk of heart disease, developing type 2 diabetes and help with weight management

Together, all of the different healthy components in nuts make them a powerful package:

- **Heart disease** Studies show enjoying a 30g handful of nuts every day can significantly reduce your risk of developing heart disease.¹⁻⁴ Even those who eat nuts once a week have less heart disease than those who don't eat any nuts.¹ It seems frequent nut consumption is associated with lower levels of inflammatory markers,^{33,34} which may partially explain the lower risk of both heart disease and diabetes. In general you can achieve an 8% reduction in risk of death from coronary heart disease with each weekly serving of nuts.³⁴
- **Type 2 diabetes** A recent meta analysis combining the results of over 500,000 study participants has found eating four 30g handfuls of nuts a week reduces the risk of developing diabetes by 13%.⁸ Plus, studies have found that including nuts in meals can reduce the rise in blood glucose levels following the meal.³⁵⁻³⁸ In this way nuts have a glycemic index (GI) lowering effect. High blood glucose after eating is common in people with diabetes and contributes to diabetes-related complications (involving damage to eyes, kidneys, nerves and blood vessels).³⁹
- **Weight management** Eating a low fat diet does not guarantee you will lose weight. Scientists reported the results of an eight-year study looking at the relationship between diet and health in more than 50,000 nurses in the US.⁴⁰ They discovered the women who ate more nuts, gained less weight. Another study of over 120,000 healthy men and women, found that eating nuts meant they were less likely to gain weight over the four years studied.⁴¹ This is supported by several other large studies which suggest that people eating a handful of nuts five or more times a week do not weigh more than those who don't or never ate nuts.¹⁻⁴ Clinical studies have also shown that people don't gain weight as expected when they add nuts to their diet.⁴²⁻⁴⁴ The combination of protein, fibre and healthy fats help satisfy the appetite⁴⁵⁻⁴⁷ and it appears we don't absorb all the fat in nuts – nut eaters excrete more fat.⁴⁸⁻⁵⁰

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