



**RESEARCH ROUND UP: THREE MORE REASONS TO ENJOY  
A DAILY HANDFUL OF NUTS**

**1. Brain food**

New research<sup>1</sup> from China has uncovered a link between eating tree nuts and reducing depression symptoms.

The cross-sectional study analysed the effects of eating nuts on preventing depressive symptoms in more than 13,000 people and found depressive symptoms were less common in those who ate 1 to 3 and more than four serves of nuts a week compared to those who ate less than one serve of nuts a week.

“This is an interesting study in an exciting area of emerging science. It is thought that the combination of healthy fats and antioxidant phytochemicals in nuts may act as protectors against depressive symptoms through effects on brain chemistry and inflammation,” said Lisa Yates, Nuts for Life Program Manager and Advanced Accredited Practising Dietitian. “This new research provides another good reason to enjoy a handful of nuts a day.”



**Suggested Tweet:**

*New research from China has found eating a handful of #nuts a few times a week may reduce symptoms of #depression.*

**2. Nuts for your nuts**

New research from Harvard University suggests eating nuts five times a week substantially lowers the risk of overall mortality after a prostate cancer diagnosis

Published in the *British Journal of Cancer*, the study of 47,000 male health professionals followed for 26 years found those who ate a 30g handful of tree nuts\* five or more times a week after diagnosis of prostate cancer, had a 34 per cent lower risk of overall mortality than those who ate nuts less than once a month. Eating nuts did not reduce the risk of developing prostate cancer but aided in overall survival.

“The improved insulin sensitivity associated with eating nuts could be behind the results, with research increasingly linking insulin resistance with prostate cancer risk and progression,” said Ms Yates.

“Nuts contain important nutrients such as unsaturated fats, protein, vitamins such as vitamin E, folate and niacin, minerals such as magnesium, calcium, and potassium, and phytochemicals – all of which may offer cardioprotective, anti-carcinogenic, anti-inflammatory and antioxidants properties,” she said.

Prostate cancer was the most commonly diagnosed cancer in Australia in 2012 and is considered to be again in 2016. In 2016 it is estimated 1 in 6 Australian men will be diagnosed with it by their 85<sup>th</sup> birthday<sup>3</sup>.

\*Tree nuts include almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamias, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios and walnuts



**Suggested Tweet:**

*Harvard University: eating #nuts 5 times a week lowers risk of overall mortality after a #prostate cancer diagnosis*

### **3. Ditch calorie counting for Mediterranean diet**

Eating a higher fat Mediterranean diet with olive oil or nuts and no calorie restriction does not cause weight gain.

A new PREDIMED study published in the *Lancet Diabetes and Endocrinology* journal followed more than 7,000 older people at risk of cardiovascular disease or type 2 diabetes for almost five years and found those who ate a non-calorie restricted, higher fat diet rich in nuts (30g a day) or olive oil did not gain weight as expected and in fact lost a centimetre from their waist.

“This study adds to the growing evidence that diets high in fat will not lead to weight gain. Nuts are high in healthy fats and are nutrient dense. Nut eaters generally have a lower body mass index, a better diet, less risk of chronic disease and are less likely to gain weight than people who avoid eating nuts,” said Ms Yates. “There is nothing to fear from adding a daily handful of nuts to a healthy diet.”

The Australian Dietary Guidelines recommend Australians eat a handful (30g) of nuts<sup>5</sup> and note that Australian adults need to increase nut consumption by 350%<sup>6</sup>. Currently just 4 per cent of Australians eat 30g of nuts a day<sup>7</sup> with the 2011-13 Australian Health Survey showing on average, Australians reported eating just 5-6g of nuts each day<sup>8</sup> - well short of the 30g serving size.



**Suggested Tweet**

*Ditch the low fat diet! Eating a higher fat #Mediterraneandiet with #nuts and no calorie restriction does not lead to weight gain*

-ends-

*Issued on behalf of Nuts For Life, Australia's leading nutrition authority on tree nuts. The nutrition education initiative, funded by the Australian Tree Nut Industry and Horticulture Innovation Australia, aims to educate Australians about the nutrition and health benefits of regular tree nut consumption.*

Web - [www.nutsforlife.com.au](http://www.nutsforlife.com.au) Facebook - [www.facebook.com/Nuts4Life](https://www.facebook.com/Nuts4Life)

Twitter - [@NutsForLife](https://twitter.com/NutsForLife)

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### **References**

<sup>1</sup>Su Q et al. Nut consumption is associated with depressive symptoms among Chinese adults, *Depress Anxiety* 2016 Apr 20, doi: 10.1002/da.22516. Epub ahead of print

<sup>2</sup>Ying Bao et al, Nut consumption and prostate cancer risk and mortality, *British Journal of Cancer* 2016 00, 1-4| doi: 10.1038/bjc.2016.181

<sup>3</sup>Australian Government Cancer Australia, Prostate cancer in Australia, last updated: 6 May 2016, <https://prostate-cancer.canceraustralia.gov.au/statistics>

<sup>4</sup> Estruch, Ramon et al. Effect of a high-fat Mediterranean diet on bodyweight and waist circumference: a prespecified secondary outcomes analysis of the PREDIMED randomised controlled trial, *The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology* , June 2016, Volume 0 , Issue 0

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