

Nuts and Heart Health



A FACTSHEET FOR CLIENTS AND PATIENTS

Enjoying a handful of nuts every day can reduce your risk of developing cardiovascular disease by more than 20% and coronary heart disease by nearly 30%^[1]. And if you have heart disease, eating nuts can reduce your risk of dying from it^[1].



Regularly eating nuts can also significantly reduce total cholesterol, LDL (bad) cholesterol and improve the ratio of bad to good cholesterol, which are all risk factors for heart disease^[2].

How many nuts do I need to eat?

A 30g serve (about one handful) of nuts 2–5 times a week supports heart health, and around two handfuls (60g) each day lowers cholesterol.

Which nuts are best?

All nuts have a similar effect on heart health so enjoy a variety of nuts everyday. However, we know Australians eat too much salt (which can increase blood pressure), so it's best to enjoy raw or roasted, unsalted nuts as your everyday choice, saving salted nuts for special occasions.

How do nuts support heart health?

- Nuts have a **high proportion of healthy, mono- and polyunsaturated fats**, and lower unhealthy saturated fats. A diet high in saturated and trans-fat is associated with higher cholesterol levels^[3].

- Nuts contain **phytosterols, which help reduce cholesterol** in the blood by reducing the amount that the body absorbs, and removing it from the body instead^[4, 5].
- Arginine, an essential amino acid, helps **blood vessels remain flexible and prevent blood clots**^[6].
- Vitamin E, riboflavin, selenium, manganese, copper, zinc and polyphenols are all found in nuts. These act as antioxidants, which help **protect your body's cells from damage caused by oxidation**^[7–9].
- The fibre and soluble fibre found in nuts helps reduce blood cholesterol by **lowering cholesterol re-absorption** from the intestine^[10].

What does all this mean?

Regularly eating nuts can reduce your risk of developing heart disease or dying from heart disease if you already have it.

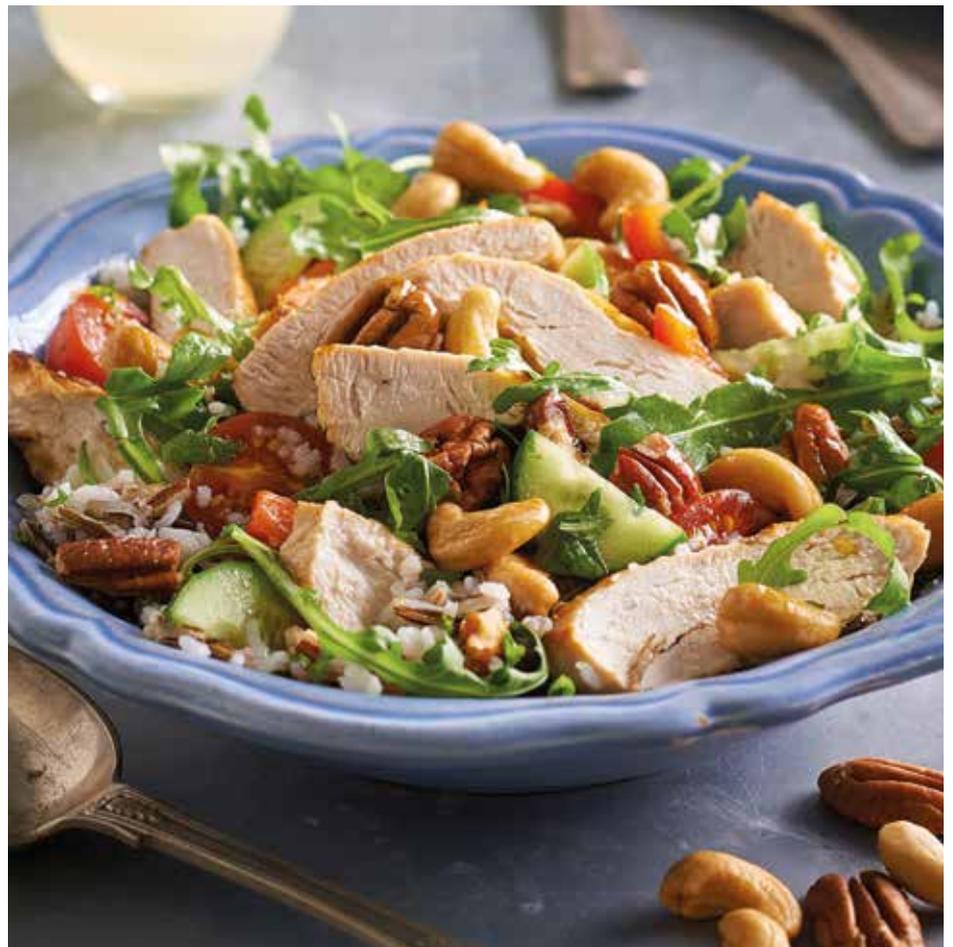
To put it simply, eating nuts is good for a healthy heart.

In addition to supporting heart health, there is also strong evidence for nuts in reducing the risk of diabetes^[11], overweight and obesity^[12], supporting brain health and reducing the risk of cancer^[13].



Ideas for adding nuts to your diet

- Toss a handful of nuts through your salad for a delicious, healthy crunch.
- Sprinkle your favourite spices on a handful of nuts for a savoury snack.
- When baking, substitute some or all of the flour with a nut meal or flour.
- Serve nuts as a crunchy appetiser when entertaining.



References

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