

Top 10 Nut FAQ's

A FACTSHEET FOR CLIENTS AND PATIENTS

Q Should I avoid nuts if I'm trying to lose weight?

A No, you don't need to avoid nuts if you're trying to lose weight.

Eating a handful of nuts (30 grams) each day can actually help you to maintain a healthy body weight. This is thought to be because:

- Nuts contain nutrients which can help control appetite such as healthy fats, fibre and protein. Healthy fats can reduce our desire to eat by switching on some of the satiety hormones in the intestines.
- Studies have found nut eaters excrete around 10% more fat in their stools, meaning they are not absorbing all the fat and energy from the nuts.

Q How many nuts can I eat at one time?

A Enjoy at least a handful of nuts every day. You can eat nuts more than once a day, and still reap numerous benefits.

We should all be aiming for at least one handful of nuts each day. But there's no reason why you cannot eat more than one handful, as research suggests that around two handfuls each day assists with cholesterol lowering without affecting weight.

Q Can I eat salted nuts?

A We recommend unsalted nuts as your everyday nut, saving salted nuts for special occasions. But remember, eating some salted nuts (as part of a healthy diet) is probably better than eating no nuts at all!!!

Salted nuts contain all the nutrition and health benefits of raw or roasted nuts – they just have a higher sodium (salt) content. Salted nuts only contain around 1% added salt, so in a 30g handful, that would equal approximately 0.3g salt (or approximately 130mg sodium), in other words, the salt contained in a handful of nuts is pretty small. However, as a nation, we consume too much salt which in turn can increase your risk of heart attacks and strokes.

Q Are raw nuts better than roasted nuts?

A There are only minor nutritional differences between raw and roasted nuts, so enjoy them both.

Nuts roasted in oil only contain around 5% more fat than raw nuts. This is because roasted nuts actually absorb very little of the oil they're roasted in. And in terms of taste, roasting nuts tends to add crunch and also brings out more of their nutty flavour.

Nutrients (especially minerals), become more concentrated during the roasting process as moisture is lost, meaning that roasted nuts have less water and a higher concentration of minerals. B group vitamins and Vitamin E are not heat stable, so these are also reduced in roasted nuts. Roasting can also cause the nut skins to fall off and since they are a good source of fibre and antioxidant compounds, consuming the skins is a good idea.



Q Do I need to eat activated nuts?

A No, you don't need to eat activated nuts. Eating nuts regularly (activated or not), is what is important.

Activated nuts are soaked in water (usually overnight). The soaking is thought to break down some of the proteins, starches, oils and other nutrients like phytates in the nuts, seemingly making them more digestible.

There is very little evidence that activated nuts provide any additional benefits. If you enjoy activated nuts, then that's great and you should definitely eat them, but you will still receive health benefits from regularly eating non-activated nuts.

Q Can I eat nut butter?

A Yes, you can eat and enjoy nut butters. They still provide many of the benefits of whole nuts.

Research shows the main difference is that more fat is absorbed from nut butters than whole nuts. This is because fat is trapped in the fibrous structure of whole nuts, with much of it being excreted from the body. Whereas in butters and finely chopped nuts, the fat is no longer 'trapped' meaning more fat is available to be absorbed.

Nut butters are an excellent option for infants and younger children, who are at risk of choking on whole nuts, and the elderly or those with chewing difficulties. Remember that nut butters can be very moreish, so always opt for a nut butter with no added sugars, salt or oils.

Q What are the health benefits of eating nuts?

A There are loads of health benefits of eating nuts. Eat a handful, every day.

Nuts are a nutrient dense food, rich in essential vitamins, minerals, mono- and polyunsaturated fatty acids (healthy fats), protein, fibre and phytochemicals.

All nuts are gluten free, naturally low in sodium and contain no added sugars. Their unique combination of nutrients is one possible reasons why they have been linked to a whole host of health benefits, enhancing life and reducing chronic disease risk.

Evidence shows that those who regularly eat nuts have a reduced risk of: heart disease, type 2 diabetes, overweight and obesity, cancer and depression.



Q What's the best way to store nuts?

A Keep nuts cool to keep them fresh.

To keep nuts in their best condition, store them in an airtight container in the refrigerator or freezer. Nuts can be refrigerated for up to 4 months and frozen for up to 6 months.

Q Can nuts affect my digestion?

A Yes, nuts affect digestion and can help to promote a healthier gut.

Consuming nuts may increase the growth of healthy bacteria in your gut. Nuts act as foods (prebiotics) for the bacteria (probiotics) in your gut. Nut skins in particular, appear to play an important role in gut health since they are rich in fibre and phytochemical compounds, with antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. This may cause healthy amounts of bloating and positively impact your gut health. Remember, if you have been eating a diet low in fibre, it's best to introduce high fibre foods like nuts gradually, so your body has time to adjust.

Q Is it OK to eat nuts if I have diverticular disease?

A Yes, you can still eat nuts (unless they specifically cause discomfort).

Previous guidelines (from the 1990's) recommended to avoid nuts and seeds as part of the treatment for diverticular disease. These guidelines have since changed due to the results of several studies which showed no association of nuts increasing the risk of diverticular symptoms. Therefore, it is no longer recommended that you avoid nuts, unless they cause particular discomfort. Nuts are a valuable source of fibre, and fibre is helpful for diverticular disease.