



## NUTS AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT TO THE MEDITERRANEAN DIET

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It is widely recognised by nutritionists and researchers around the world that the Mediterranean diet is one of the best for your health and weight. But what is it about this diet that is so good for you?

A study published by the British Medical Journal in June 2009 found that certain foods in the Mediterranean diet may actually offer the bulk of the nutritional benefits. Included in this list is nuts. <sup>1</sup>

Tree nuts, almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, chestnuts, hazelnuts, macadamias, pecans, pistachios, pine nuts and walnuts and are a small package with a large number of essential nutrients such as healthy fats, Vitamin E and fibre. They are an easy and effective way to reduce heart disease risk, lower cholesterol and control weight.

A handful of nuts (30-50g) daily can actually enhance palatability and nutrient quality of the diet without posing a threat for weight gain, even though they are high in (healthy) fats. The fat, fibre and protein in nuts can help to satisfy hunger for longer, meaning you may actually eat less overall. <sup>2</sup>

Adding a handful of nuts to the traditional Mediterranean diet was also found to help control the risk of Metabolic Syndrome in research published by the Journal of American Medical Association last December. <sup>3</sup> Metabolic Syndrome is a cluster of health indicators that if left untreated can lead to heart disease, stroke, diabetes and obesity.

So it seems it is high time for nuts to take their rightful place in the healthy spotlight. Add a handful of nuts to your diet and observe the benefits for yourself.

Some handy tips to include nuts in your daily diet are

- Toss roasted pistachios through a salad of roasted pumpkin, spinach and avocado
- Blend almonds, milk, yoghurt and ice cream to make a delicious smoothie
- Roast chestnuts and add to a poultry stuffing mix
- Bake blueberry bread with pecans
- Dry roast cashew and sprinkle over a Thai beef salad
- Try hazelnut in a chilli pasta
- Crumble macadamias into your next risotto
- Add roasted pine nuts to a frittata with tomato and feta
- Use walnuts next time you make pesto and add to grilled meat
- Whiz Brazil nuts, garlic, ricotta and parsley together for a mushroom stuffing

For more information on the health benefits of nuts and for tasty nut recipes for all occasions please visit [www.nutsforlife.com.au](http://www.nutsforlife.com.au)

**For further information, to request an interview with Nuts for Life dietitian Lisa Yates or images, please contact Porter Novelli Melbourne:**

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<sup>1</sup> Trichopoulou A, , Bamia C, Trichopoulos D. Anatomy of health effects of Mediterranean diet: Greek EPIC prospective cohort study **BMJ 2009;338:b2337, doi: 10.1136/bmj.b2337 (Published 23 June 2009)**

<sup>2</sup> Richard D. Mattes, Penny M. Kris-Etherton, and Gary D. Foster. Impact of Peanuts and tree Nuts on Body Weight and Healthy Weight Loss in Adults. *J.Nutr.*2008 138: 1741S - 1745

<sup>3</sup> Salas-Salvado J et al. Effect of a Mediterranean Diet supplemented with nuts on metabolic syndrome status. *Arch Intern Med* 2008; 168(22): 2449-2458