



Nuts to you Diabetes

Of the 940,000 Australians currently with diabetes they are also more likely to be obese or have Diabetes - the term coined to describe these two conditions.¹ So naturally losing weight is essential to prevent diabetes but also help treat it. With Diabetes Awareness Week (10-16 July) just around the corner, it's valuable to understand how a simple handful of nuts each day may not only aid weight management but also reduce the risk of diabetes and help in its treatment.

It was once thought that to lose weight you needed to follow a low fat diet. For many people this meant avoiding nuts because they are high in fat. Whereas the research shows that eating nut regularly *does not* lead to a greater risk of weight gain or obesity^{2,3} and in fact nuts should be included in weight management diets since they help with satiety and appetite control.⁴ Regular nut consumption also reduces the risk of developing diabetes.⁵

There are many nutrients in nuts that enables them to help glycemic control, critical for the treatment and prevention of diabetes. Nuts are rich in healthy fats, fibre, magnesium and chromium which are all thought to play a role in diabetes management.^{6,7,8} Nuts (when eaten alone) have minimal effect on postprandial blood glucose levels (the rise in blood glucose following a meal), and can limit the postprandial glycemic response when consumed with carbohydrate-rich foods.⁵ In this way nuts are thought to have a low glycemic index effect.

A new study has found that eating varying amounts of pistachios (28g, 56g and 84g) with carbohydrate rich foods can help reduce post prandial glycemia.⁹ This new study adds to a body of evidence supporting this beneficial role in diabetes. Previous research has found that almonds (30,60,90g) exhibits a similar effect.^{10,11} In addition nuts appear to improve insulin resistance which can lead to diabetes.¹² While more long-term clinical trials are needed to fully examine the role of nuts on glycemic control in people with pre-diabetes and diabetes, nonetheless the existing work does highlight that nuts can play a role in the dietary treatment for these conditions.

It's the little things that count - almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, chestnuts, hazelnuts, macadamias, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios and walnuts are packed full of beneficial substances for good health, including unsaturated fats, Vitamin E and fibre. Despite what many believe, incorporated into a moderate fat, kilojoule controlled diet where unhealthy snacks such as muffins, cakes, biscuits and crackers can be swapped for nuts,¹³ nuts can put the pleasure back into a weight loss diet, and may help you stick to a healthy eating plan for longer.¹⁴

Go a little nuts managing diabetes - it is as easy as eating a handful of nuts every day, and it just as important as ensuring you eat 2 serves of fruit and 5 vegetables daily; 2 + 5 + a handful of nuts!

We've served up five handy tips for you to include nuts in your daily diet:

- Snack on a handful of natural nuts mid afternoon to tie you over til dinner
- Sprinkle pine nuts or cashews through a stir fry
- Roast hazelnuts or chestnuts and toss them through a salad
- Crush Brazil nuts or walnuts over low fat yoghurt and fruit
- Sprinkle a handful of chopped macadamias or pecans over a wholegrain breakfast cereal

To find more nut health facts, tasty nut menu suggestions and recipes visit www.nutsforlife.com.au.

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Nuts for Life is a nutrition communications initiative of the Australian Tree Nut Industry and Horticulture Australia to provide information about the nutrition and health benefits of tree nuts.

For all the latest information, facts and research on the nutrition and health benefits of nuts, and for tips and recipes to include more nuts in your day, visit www.nutsforlife.com.au and subscribe to our online newsletter *NutENews*.

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