

Nuts Make Nutrition News

There's good news for nut lovers. Nuts are tasty, versatile and good for you, too. In fact, research has uncovered some important health benefits linked to nuts. Eating nuts as part of a healthful diet may help you reduce your risk of heart disease and manage your body weight.

Nutrition in a Nutshell

It's true that nuts are relatively high in fat. Yet, the fat profile of nuts is part of what makes them so nutritious. Nuts are naturally cholesterol-free and *trans* fat-free; many are also low in saturated fat. The fats in nuts are mostly monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. These types of heart-healthy fats help maintain or lower blood cholesterol levels. While the higher fat content contributes calories, nuts are also nutrient-rich. That means, for the calories they contain, nuts are sources of key nutrients, such as vitamin E, selenium, magnesium, zinc, phosphorus, potassium and/or fiber. Nuts also contain protein (amounts vary by type of nut), which is why they are part of MyPyramid's Meat & Beans Group.

Nuts Weigh In

Research finds that eating a modest amount of nuts a day (1-1/2 ounces) may improve your health. Evidence shows that people who eat various types of nuts, including almonds, walnuts, peanuts and pistachios, have lower blood cholesterol levels and may reduce their risk of heart disease. In addition, research suggests that nuts may help you feel satisfied, thus helping with weight management. An important tip is to add nuts without adding extra calories. To do that, you'll want to substitute nuts for other food choices. For example, snack on an ounce of peanuts instead of an ounce of potato chips, top pancakes with a half-ounce of chopped pecans instead of a tablespoon of butter or munch an ounce of almonds instead of an ice cream bar. The crunchy texture of nuts, along with their protein, fat and fiber, makes nuts a satisfying choice.

Nut Label News

Nuts were the first food allowed to carry a "qualified"



Honeyed Orange-Almond Chicken

health claim on their labels. This means that the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) allows manufacturers of certain nuts to print this statement on qualifying product labels: *Scientific evidence suggests but does not prove that eating 1.5 ounces per day of most nuts as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease.*

A "qualified" health claim has good scientific evidence to support the claim, but the evidence is not considered conclusive. Nuts allowed to carry this health claim include almonds, hazelnuts, peanuts, pecans, pistachios and walnuts.

A Handful a Day

Nuts are so tasty that it can be easy to overdo it. So it's a good idea to portion your nuts before you begin eating them. One ounce of nuts is about the size of a small handful; use the amounts in the chart below to count out your portion. Count an ounce of nuts as 2 ounce-equivalents from the Meat & Beans Group.

While there is no nutrition difference between natural ("raw") nuts and dry roasted nuts, oil roasted, honey roasted and coated nuts have slightly higher amounts of fat, sugars and/or calories. Besides snacking on nuts, try these tips for fitting nuts into your healthful eating plan.

- ❖ Sprinkle chopped nuts on yogurt and cereal.
- ❖ Add chopped or ground nuts to bread, pancake, waffle, muffin or cookie recipes.
- ❖ Serve nuts with cheese and crackers.
- ❖ Sprinkle chopped nuts on a bowl of soup – try peanuts on tomato soup, pecans on potato soup or hazelnuts on split pea soup.
- ❖ Add whole, sliced or chopped nuts to salads. Toss pecans or walnuts with blue cheese or gorgonzola on a spinach salad; top chicken salad with slivered almonds.
- ❖ Add toasted nuts, such as almonds or pine nuts, to steamed vegetables and pasta dishes.
- ❖ Mix ground nuts into the breading for fish or chicken.



Calories, fats and protein in 1 ounce of unsalted nuts*:

	Approx. number of nuts in 1 ounce	Calories	Fat (g)	Saturated Fat (g)	Unsaturated Fat (g)	Protein (g)
Almonds**	23	160	14	1	13	6
Brazils	6-8	190	19	4	13	4
Cashews	18	160	13	3	10	4
Hazelnuts**	21	180	17	1.5	15	4
Macadamias	10-12	200	22	3	17	2
Peanuts**	28	170	14	2	12	7
Pecans**	19 halves	200	20	2	18	3
Pistachios**	49	160	13	1.5	11	6
Walnuts**	14 halves	190	18	1.5	16	4

Source: USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 19, 2006. Data for almonds, Brazil nuts, hazelnuts, pecans, and walnuts are based on un-roasted varieties; cashews, macadamias and pistachios are dry roasted.

*Numbers listed for calories, fats and protein are “rounded.”

**These nuts qualify for the FDA heart-health claim.

These Healthy Living recipes showcase the versatility of nuts in delicious dishes that you’ll enjoy preparing and eating. Give them a try!

Honeyed Orange-Almond Chicken

Prep: 10 min.
Total: 26 min.

- 4 small boneless skinless chicken breast halves (1 lb.)
- 2 Tbsp. honey
- 1/4 tsp. *each*: salt and black pepper
- 1/4 cup orange marmalade
- 1/2 cup PLANTERS Sliced Almonds
- 1 cup whole wheat couscous; cook as directed on package
- 2 cups broccoli florets, steamed

PREHEAT broiler. Place chicken on rack of broiler pan. Combine honey, salt and pepper; brush evenly onto chicken.

BROIL chicken, 4 to 6 inches from heat, 5 to 7 min. on each side or until cooked through (170°F). Brush with marmalade; sprinkle with almonds. Broil an additional 1 to 2 min. or until almonds are lightly toasted.

SERVE with the couscous and broccoli.

Makes 4 servings.

Nutrition Bonus:

This flavorful dish includes 2 tablespoons of almonds (~1/2 ounce) per serving and can fit into an overall heart healthy diet. More good news – the broccoli supplies vitamin C.

Nutrition Information Per Serving: 470 calories, 10g total fat, 1.5g saturated fat, 65mg cholesterol, 230mg sodium, 60g carbohydrate, 8g dietary fiber, 20g sugars, 34g protein, 20%DV vitamin A, 30%DV vitamin C, 8%DV calcium, 15%DV iron.

Exchange: 4 Starch, 3 Meat (VL), 1 Fat.

Nutty Layered Beef Salad

Prep: 15 min.
Grill: 14 min.

- 1 beef top round steak (3/4 lb.)
- Dash of chili powder
- 8 cups mixed salad greens
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/4 cup red onion slices
- 1/3 cup KRAFT FREE Italian Fat Free Dressing
- 1/2 of a medium ripe avocado, peeled, pitted
- 1/2 cup PLANTERS Lightly Salted NUT•rition™ Heart Healthy Mix

PREHEAT grill to medium-high heat. Sprinkle steak with chili powder. Grill 5 to 7 min. on each side or until cooked through. Remove steak from grill; cover loosely with foil. Let stand 5 min.

CUT steak across the grain into thin slices. Layer with the lettuce, tomatoes and onion in clear glass serving bowl.

PLACE dressing and avocado in blender container; cover. Blend until smooth; drizzle over salad. Sprinkle with the nut mix.

Makes 6 servings, about 2 cups each.

Nutrition Bonus:

Enjoy this delicious and nutritious salad. The recipe illustrates one sensible way to include nuts as part of your healthy eating plan. The salad greens provide vitamin A and team up with the tomato to contribute a good source of vitamin C.

Nutrition Information Per Serving: 180 calories, 11g total fat, 1.5g saturated fat, 25mg cholesterol, 220mg sodium, 9g carbohydrate, 4g dietary fiber, 3g sugars, 14g protein, 25%DV vitamin A, 25%DV vitamin C, 4%DV calcium, 10%DV iron.

Exchange: 1 Vegetable, 2 Meat (L), 1 Fat.

Dietary Exchanges based on *Exchange Lists for Meal Planning* © 2003 by the American Diabetes Association and the American Dietetic Association.

