

Health Nuts

A study conducted by Loma Linda University in California found that eating nuts lowered risk of heart disease and helped participants to keep their weight down. Other large-scale studies, including the Physician's Health Study, the Iowa Women's Health Study and the Harvard Nurses Health Study, also found that eating nuts lowered heart disease risk. Other studies have shown that nuts help lower bad "LDL" cholesterol. In fact, in July 2003, the FDA approved the following health claim for nut packaging labels:

"Scientific evidence suggests, but does not prove, that eating 1.5 ounces per day of some nuts, as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of heart disease."

It only takes a small handful of nuts to satisfy hunger (and help you stay full longer), and there are many varieties to choose from. Here are six of the healthiest.

1-WALNUTS When it comes to nuts, the walnut is king. It's a great source of the healthy omega-3 essential fatty acids, which have been found to protect the heart, promote better cognitive function, and provide anti-inflammatory benefits for asthma, rheumatoid arthritis, eczema and psoriasis.

2-ALMONDS Just a 1/4 cup of almonds contains nearly 25% of your needed daily value of magnesium and other essential nutrients. In fact, a quarter cup of almonds also has almost as much calcium as a quarter cup of milk.

3-CASHEWS Are lower in fat than most nuts and 65% of this fat is unsaturated fatty acids.

4-PECANS An excellent source of over 19 vitamins and minerals. A new study suggests that eating 3/4 cup of pecans a day may significantly lower LDL (bad) cholesterol and help to clear arteries.

5-BRAZIL NUTS High amounts of selenium in Brazil nuts may help prevent breast cancer.

6-MACADAMIA NUTS High in protein, fiber, healthy monounsaturated fats, potassium and magnesium.

Also believed to help lower LDL cholesterol.

The key with nuts is simply not to over eat them. They are highly concentrated in both their calories and their nutrients, so you only need a small handful at a time. Eating a variety of nuts appears to be the best way to get all the different benefits each nut has to offer.