Research Spotlight: Cardio Health

Peanuts pack a nutritional wallop into those little shells. Along with fiber, they provide heart-healthy unsaturated fats and numerous vitamins, minerals, and bioactive compounds. What does that mean for people’s cardiovascular health?

The study:
To answer this question, Harvard researchers studied more than 210,000 Americans for more than two decades.2

The findings:
Compared with those who didn’t eat peanuts, people who ate peanuts at least twice per week had a:

• 15 percent lower risk for coronary heart disease
• 10 percent lower risk for stroke2

The implication:
The fiber and other nutrients in peanuts likely played a role in these findings.2 Eating soluble fiber specifically may lower levels of LDL, or “bad,” cholesterol10 and decrease the risk for cardiovascular disease.6

A Tale of 3 Carbs
Carbohydrate comes in different forms, each with its own chemical structure. The three primary types of carbohydrate are:

1. **Sugars**, which are composed of either one sugar molecule or two sugar molecules joined together
2. **Starches**, which are composed of many glucose molecules strung together in a chain
3. **Dietary fiber**, which is also composed of many sugar molecules, but they’re bound together in a way that makes them indigestible

*Fun Fact: Fiber makes up 40 percent of the carbs in dry-roasted peanuts.5*

Fiber by the Numbers
Most Americans get only about 15 grams of dietary fiber per day—an amount that’s substantially less than the recommended amount.7 Peanuts can help make up this shortfall. One ounce of oil-roasted peanuts contains nearly 3 grams of fiber, similar to the amount in ½ cup of quinoa, ½ cup of cooked winter squash, or ¼ cup of dates.2

Daily Goals for Fiber

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ages 19 to 30</th>
<th>Ages 31 to 50</th>
<th>Ages 51 and older</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>28 grams</td>
<td>25 grams</td>
<td>22 grams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>34 grams</td>
<td>31 grams</td>
<td>28 grams</td>
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Source: Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020 (8th ed.)7
Staving Off Hunger

Are you watching your weight? Good news! Peanuts and peanut butter can help. The combination of fiber and protein in these foods keeps you feeling fuller for longer after eating. By reducing hunger, peanuts and peanut butter may help with weight control.

Why? YY.

An appetite-suppressing hormone called peptide YY may play a role. In one study, obese women who included peanut butter in their breakfasts secreted more peptide YY in response. They also reported a decreased desire to eat for eight to 12 hours afterward.

Peanutty Breakfast Ideas

- Spread peanut butter on waffles or pancakes in place of syrup.
- Sprinkle peanuts over yogurt or oatmeal.
- Blend peanut butter into a banana smoothie.
- Check out the recipes for Peanut Butter and Strawberry Quesadillas, Overnight Apple Peanut Butter Oatmeal, and more at www.peanut-institute.com/recipes/breakfast.

Managing Blood Sugar

The American Diabetes Association calls nuts a diabetes superfood, and fiber is part of the reason. Fiber slows down digestion, so carbs and other nutrients are absorbed into the bloodstream more slowly and steadily. This helps prevent sudden, sharp spikes in blood sugar after meals. Over time, that may lower the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

Did you know?

Having a bagel and glass of juice can cause blood sugar levels to spike. But spreading peanut butter on the bagel helps keep blood sugar levels more stable.

References