Health benefits of nuts

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Nuts are a tasty, convenient treat that can be enjoyed on all kinds of diets — from keto to vegan. Despite being high in fat, they have many impressive health and weight benefits.



Eating nuts as part of a healthy diet may be good for the heart. Nuts contain unsaturated fatty acids and other nutrients. And they're a great snack food. They are inexpensive, easy to store and easy to pack when you're on the go.

One drawback to nuts is that some may be high in calories. So, it's important to limit portions. But choosing nuts instead of a less healthy snack may help you stick to a heart-healthy diet.

How might nuts help your heart?

Research has found that frequently eating nuts lowers levels of inflammation related to heart disease and diabetes.

Regularly eating a healthy diet that includes nuts may:

Improve artery health.

Reduce inflammation related to heart disease.

Decrease the risk of blood clots, which can lead to heart attacks and strokes.

Lower the risk of high blood pressure.

Lower the risk of early death due to heart disease.

Lower unhealthy cholesterol levels, specifically triglycerides and low-density lipoprotein, also called LDL or bad cholesterol.

What makes nuts heart healthy

Nuts are a good source of protein. Most nuts also contain at least some of these heart-healthy substances:

Unsaturated fats - It's not entirely clear why, but it's thought that the "good" fats in nuts — both monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats — lower bad cholesterol levels. Omega-3 fatty acids - Many nuts are rich in omega-3 fatty acids. Omega-3s are healthy fatty acids. They may reduce the risk of heart attacks and strokes.

Fibre - All nuts contain fiber, which helps lower cholesterol. Fiber also makes you feel full, so you eat less.

Plant sterols - Some nuts contain plant sterols, a substance that can help lower cholesterol. Plant sterols are often added to products such as margarine and orange juice for additional health benefits, but sterols occur naturally in nuts.

L-arginine - Nuts are also a source of L-arginine. Research suggests that L-arginine may lower blood pressure, improve cholesterol and improve overall blood vessel health.

Best options

Most nuts appear to be generally healthy. But some may have more heart-healthy nutrients than others. For example, walnuts contain high amounts of omega-3 fatty acids.

Almonds, macadamia nuts, hazelnuts and pecans also appear to be quite heart healthy. So are peanuts — though they are technically not a nut, but a legume, like beans.

It's best to choose unsalted or unsweetened nuts. Adding salt or sugar to nuts may cancel out their heart-healthy benefits.