

[IMAGE]

Peanuts: The Right Type of Fat

Peanuts are the most widely consumed nut in the United States. Peanuts have been viewed as unhealthy in the past because of their high fat content, but recent research may be proving the critics wrong. Consider the results of this study published in the *Journal of American College of Nutrition*.

Research undertaken by Professor Richard Mattes, et al., of Purdue University, recruited 15 healthy adults for three trials: substitution of 500 calories of subjects' daily fat intake with 500 calories of peanuts; adding the same amount of peanuts to their daily intake; and allowing individuals to eat peanuts any way they chose. The results? Triglyceride levels (higher levels of which have been linked to heart disease) in the subjects were lowered drastically; in some cases, by as much as 24 percent. Perhaps the most appealing news is that research yielded "no significant change in body weight, despite adding 500 calories of peanuts a day for eight weeks."

The researchers concluded: "This particular study indicates it may be an appropriate health recommendation to include peanuts in the daily diet." These findings add to the evidence linking regular peanut consumption to heart health.

So eat those peanuts! They're available in a variety of forms, although you may want to choose the unsalted variety, since sodium is a fairly well-established risk factor for high blood pressure. Many health food stores also offer salt-free peanut butter or peanut butter that doesn't contain added sugar, preservatives, or anything else - just heart-healthy peanuts!

Reference:

Alper CM, Mattes RD. Peanut consumption improves indices of cardiovascular disease risk in healthy adults. *Journal of the American College of Nutrition* 2003: Volume 22, pp.133-141.

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