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March 25, 2006

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### It's Full of Fat and Helps You Lose Weight





Nuts are chocked full of healthy nutrients. Knowing how to make them part of your diet can help you reap all kinds of health benefits.

By [Kathleen Zelman, MPH, RD/LD](#)

WebMD Weight Loss Clinic

Published Thursday, January 27, 2005.

Reviewed By [Michael Smith, MD](#)

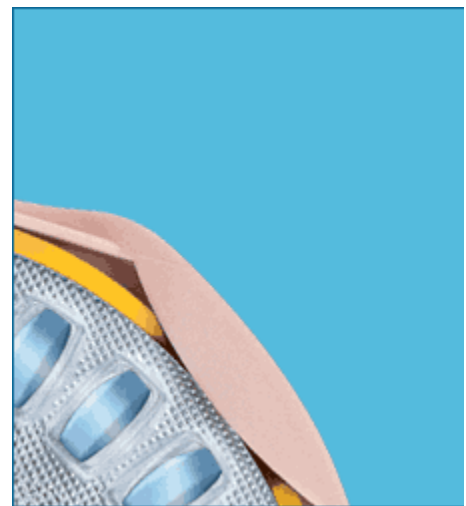
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For years, savvy dieters have shunned nuts because of their high-fat content. But dieters can rejoice. The heart-healthy fats, high fiber, and phytochemical content of nuts have catapulted these nutritious nuggets into health food heaven. The key is portion control.

Over the past several years, numerous studies have shown the healthful nature of nuts. Nuts are a powerhouse of good nutrition, packed with protein, fiber, monounsaturated fats, vitamin E, folic acid, magnesium, copper, and antioxidants. And they help reduce the risks of heart disease and diabetes and help control weight.

#### Good Fats

Bad fats that pose health problems come primarily from saturated and trans fats, neither of which are found in most nuts. Instead, most nuts are loaded with good fats: -- monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. Some nuts, such as walnuts,



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boast a rich source of heart-healthy omega-3 fatty acids, similar to salmon.

In July 2003, the FDA approved the first qualified health claim. Scientific evidence 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, the FDA says.

Packaging for walnuts, peanuts, pecans, hazelnuts, almonds, and pistachios can not make this claim. Cashews and macadamia nuts did not qualify for the health claim because of their higher fat content.

### Pump Up the Heart

The healthy fats appear to be the secret nut ingredient that prevents heart disease. The power of the heart-healthy fats, the fiber in nuts has also been shown to lower cholesterol levels.

"Our epidemiological studies have shown eating about one ounce of nuts every day can reduce the risk of heart disease in the long run by 30%," Frank Hu, MD, PhD, associate professor of nutrition and epidemiology at the Harvard School of Public Health, said in July 2003.

Nuts can also help lower LDL "bad" cholesterol and raise HDL "good" cholesterol. "Different types of nuts have high amounts of mono- and polyunsaturated fats, and when you eat this kind of good fat for carbohydrates and saturated fat, your LDL will go down," Hu says.

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