

Panel Reviews Nut Benefits Ranging from Weight Management to Heart Health

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Summary:Shahidi, one of five panelists who presented highlights from more than 50 studies linking tree nuts to a variety of health benefits as well as reduction in coronary heart disease and inflammation, Type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers.

Jul 21 2010 --- During a panel discussion at the 2010 Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) Annual Meeting & Food Expo, a panel highlighted a range of health benefits from eating nuts which have free-radical scavenging, anticarcinogenic, cholesterol-lowering, and cardioprotective abilities. While research has cited many of these benefits, the panel also cited the role of nuts in helping to manage weight.

Many people refrain from eating nuts, said Fereidoon Shahidi of Memorial University in Newfoundland, Canada. However, studies show "little or no weight change" from a diet including nuts. Shahidi, one of five panelists who presented highlights from more than 50 studies linking tree nuts to a variety of health benefits as well as reduction in coronary heart disease and inflammation, Type 2 diabetes, and certain cancers.

Different nuts offer different health benefits. For example, almond skins are extremely high in vitamin E, according to Karen Lapsley, Ph.D., chief scientific officer, Almond Board of California. Almond skins contain more phenolics than flavonoids, and they are bioavailable, said Lapsley. As a result, almond skins may have potential use as a value-added ingredient, she added.