

Regular Peanut Consumption Reported to Improve Cholesterol Levels

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Summary:People with higher levels of "bad" LDL cholesterol and triglycerides (blood fats) and those consuming poorer quality diets gained the most benefits from regular nut consumption, the researchers said.

27 May 2010 --- Researchers from California and Spain combined the data from 25 nut consumption trials conducted in 7 countries among 583 men and women and concluded that regular peanut consumption improved cholesterol levels and contributed to heart health. People with higher levels of "bad" LDL cholesterol and triglycerides (blood fats) and those consuming poorer quality diets gained the most benefits from regular nut consumption, the researchers said.

Looking at the data in all the studies, the researchers found that those consuming nuts frequently - about 67g per day, about 2.4 ounces or the equivalent of two small handfuls - reduced total cholesterol by 5.1% and LDL, "bad", cholesterol by 7.4%. Their ratio of LDL to "good" HDL cholesterol also changed by 8.3% in a favourable direction. These changes were significant (P < .001 for all).

Lead investigator for the study published in Archives of Internal Medicine, Dr Joan Sabaté from Loma Linda University, California, said, "Results of this study provide the best evidence yet that eating nuts reduces LDL cholesterol and improves the blood lipids profile. The findings from this analysis support those from epidemiological studies which have consistently shown that habitual nut consumption reduces the risk of heart disease. Thus, a simple change of eating nuts regularly can make a big difference in people's health."

Commenting on the study, Ellen Mason, a senior cardiac nurse with the British Heart Foundation, said: "Apart from salted peanuts at the pub, nuts in sugary cereals or the traditional Christmas selection, nuts have been largely lacking in our diets in the UK. What we eat is extremely important to our overall health, and adding nuts back into our diet in place of saturated fats could help to improve cholesterol levels for many people."

The study was published in the 10 May issue of Archives of Internal Medicine, a journal of the American Medical Association.