

## NUTRITION HORIZON

# Pistachios Deliver Weight Management Support, Heart Health Benefits

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Summary:This study confirms that the fat from pistachio nuts, specifically, is not completely digested or absorbed, resulting in a lower energy value.

4/12/2011 --- In a first-of-its-kind study with nuts, randomized controlled-feeding research conducted by the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) found that fat in pistachios may not be completely absorbed by the body. The findings indicate that pistachios may actually contain fewer calories per serving than originally thought further validating pistachios as one of the lowest calorie nuts with 160 calories per 30 gram serving (approximately 1 ounce). The study was presented at the Experimental Biology conference in Washington, D.C.

The research measured the energy value of pistachios by feeding 16 healthy adults the nuts as part of a controlled diet and calculating the energy value from differences in energy excretion during the dietary treatment timeframe. The resulting energy value of one 30 gram serving of pistachios was 5.9 percent less than previous calculations.

"Existing scientific research indicates that fat from nuts is poorly absorbed through the gastrointestinal tract," said lead ARS researcher David J. Baer, Ph.D., Supervisory Research Physiologist with the Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center. "This study confirms that the fat from pistachio nuts, specifically, is not completely digested or absorbed, resulting in a lower energy value."

Additional data from this study presented at Experimental Biology reinforced the heart-health benefits of pistachios. The ARS researchers found that when healthy individuals included 1.5 and 3 ounces of pistachios into their typical American diet, cardio-supportive results were shown.

### Pistachios Deliver Weight Management Support Benefits

The new data demonstrating the potential calorie savings of pistachios builds on previous research showing that pistachios are a weight-wise snack. According to researchers at the University of California Los Angeles, choosing to snack on pistachios rather than pretzels not only supports body mass index (BMI) goals, but can support heart health, too.

In a 12-week randomized study, 52 overweight and obese subjects were placed on a 500-calorie deficit diet and assigned to either a pistachio snack (about 75 pistachios providing 240 calories) or a pretzel snack group (two-ounces of pretzels providing 220 calories). The results showed that the pistachio group had better success with supporting their BMI goals compared to the pretzel group, showing pistachios can be included in a healthy diet, even for those

managing their weight.

Additionally, pistachios also known as the "Skinny Nut" are shown to be a "mindful snack" in terms of taking longer to eat and requiring the snacker to slow down and be more conscious of what has been consumed. According to behavioral eating expert, James Painter, Ph.D., R.D., Chair of the School of Family and Consumer Sciences at Eastern Illinois University, "Our research shows in-shell snackers eat 41-percent fewer calories than those who snack on shelled nuts. We also found that in-shell pistachios offer a visual cue to help reduce intake. When leftover shells are cleared immediately, snackers eat up to 22 percent more compared to leaving left over shells as a reminder of consumption. "

Pistachios are also a good source of fiber and protein. Providing about 49 kernels per 30 grams (approximately 1 ounce) serving, pistachios offer the most nuts per serving when compared to other popular snack nuts – comparatively, almonds have 23 in a serving, walnuts 14 halves and cashews, 18.