

## NUTRITION HORIZON

# Pistachios Pummel Pretzels as a Weight-Wise Snack

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Summary:The study, recently published in the Journal of the American College of Nutrition is especially significant in today's diet as snack foods account for more than a quarter of the total caloric intake among Americans.

5/4/2011 --- When it comes to healthy snacking and weight management, a new study bolsters the long-held view that not all calories are created equal. According to nutrition researchers at UCLA, choosing to snack on pistachios rather than pretzels as part of a healthy diet not only supports your body mass index (BMI) goals, but can support heart health too.

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"This study is important because it's the first of its kind to show that pistachios can be part of a successful weight management program," said Dr. David Heber, MD, PhD, director of the UCLA Center for Human Nutrition. "Snackers often think pretzels are a better choice for weight management compared to a nut like pistachios just because they are lower in fat. This study debunks that myth."

In this 12-week randomized study, 52 overweight subjects were placed on a 500-calorie deficit diet and were assigned to either a pistachio snack or pretzel snack group. The pistachio group included a daily snack of 240 calories (about 75 pistachios) and the pretzel group, a two ounce snack of similar caloric value totaling 220 calories.

The results showed that the pistachio group had better success with supporting their body mass index (BMI) goals compared to the pretzel group and that pistachios can help support heart health too, proving that pistachios can be included in a healthy diet, even for those who are managing their weight. Interestingly, with the pistachio group, 30 percent of total calories came from fat compared to the pretzel group providing 20 percent. Almost 90 percent of the fat found in pistachios is the healthy unsaturated type.