

# OPTIMAL HEALTH UNIVERSITY™

Presented by Katie Gravesen, DC

## Go Nuts for Nuts!

*Think it's impossible to find a snack that's both satisfying and health-boosting? Think again! Dr. Gravesen recommends snacking on a small handful of nuts. Not only are nuts delicious, but they are also packed with wellness-boosting properties.*



Extensive research has unshelled the fact that consuming nuts may lower the risk of coronary heart disease (*Nutr Today* 2006;41:62).

regular basis leads to an impressive 30 percent to 50 percent drop in the risk of cardiovascular disease (*Arch Latinoam Nutr* 2004;54:83-6).

Dr. Gravesen notes that some nut varieties reduce cholesterol levels: without the potentially dangerous and symptom-masking side effects associated with drugs.

### ... By Clobbering Cholesterol

Nuts are low in saturated fat (less than 7 percent) and high in unsaturated fat (40 percent to 60 percent): the perfect combination for getting cholesterol under control *without* resorting to potentially dangerous drugs.

Chiropractic care focuses on preventing health problems and on the underlying cause of disease. In addition to regularly scheduled office visits, Dr. Gravesen explains to patients that this prevention strategy also includes lifestyle changes, such as diet modification.

Studies show that nuts significantly reduce total LDL ("bad") cholesterol levels without altering HDL ("good")

levels (*Arch Latinoam Nutr* 2004;54:83-6). The exception is macadamia nuts, which lower LDL levels while raising HDL numbers — making them doubly good!

So how do nuts work? By infusing our bodies with nutrients called phytoosterols, "a class of compounds that interfere with intestinal cholesterol absorption and thus help lower blood cholesterol." (*Br J Nutr* 2006;96:36.)

To learn more about the health benefits of nuts, grab a handful of your favorite variety and read on!

### Promote Heart Health ...

Frequent consumption of nuts reduces the risk of coronary artery disease (*Br J Nutr* 2006;96:79-86).

In fact, numerous studies show that consuming small amounts of nuts on a



### Wellness Education From Katie Gravesen, DC

Nutrition is an integral component of wellness. That's why, once a month, we present an *Optimal Health University*™ focused on nutritional research.

A founding principal of chiropractic is that the mind, body and spirit are connected. Therefore, during the other weeks of the month, we offer topics on how to prevent additional physical, chemical and emotional causes of *vertebral subluxations*.

Chiropractic care centers on the correction of dysfunctional areas in the spine termed *vertebral subluxations*. This condition is linked with an array of disorders, including asthma, ear infections, back pain, carpal tunnel syndrome and headaches. Dr. Gravesen uses gentle and effective maneuvers called *chiropractic adjustments* to correct vertebral subluxations and prevent recurrence.

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## Prevent Gallstones

Nuts are rich in several compounds that may protect against gallstones, according to a 20-year study measuring the consumption of peanuts, peanut butter and assorted nuts among 80,718 women. Results showed that women who consumed more than five units of nuts (one unit = 1 ounce or 28.6 grams of nuts) per week had a “significantly lower risk” of developing gallstones (*Am J Clin Nutr* 2004;80:76).

## Dodge Diabetes

In addition to reducing the risk of coronary heart disease, frequent nut consumption helps dodge type 2 diabetes (*Br J Nutr* 2006;96:79-86).

Specifically, one study showed that women who increased their consumption of peanuts and peanut butter gained protection against the development of type 2 diabetes. The analysis included 83,818 women with no previous history of diabetes, cancer or cardiovascular disease (*JAMA* 2002;288:2554-60).

During the 16-year follow-up period, researchers collected information on the women’s consumption of peanuts and peanut butter. Results revealed the following:

- ✓ Women who ate more than 140 grams of nuts per week were 27 percent less likely to develop diabetes than those who rarely or never ate them.
- ✓ Eating nuts four times per week reduced women’s likelihood of developing diabetes by 16 percent.

*A note of caution: Many of the commercial brands of peanut butter are loaded with sugar, preservatives and added unhealthy oils. Instead, look for organic brands that have to be stirred and stored in the refrigerator.*

And peanuts aren’t the only nut with anti-diabetes power. Almonds may make an even bigger difference in diabetes risk, according to a Canadian

study.

Researchers randomly assigned nine healthy volunteers (two women, seven men) two different diets: a white bread alone or white bread with almonds on separate days. The study participants consumed the meals after a 10- to 12-hour overnight fast.

“Each meal contained 50 grams of available carbohydrate from white bread eaten alone or with 30, 60, or 90 grams (approximately 1, 2, or 3 ounces) of almonds,” note researchers.

“The addition of almonds to white bread resulted in a progressive reduction in the glycemic index of the composite meal.” This, in turn, gave subjects better blood-sugar control (*Metabolism* 2007;56:400-4).



## Boost Weight Loss

Studies show that nuts — despite their high fat content — do not cause weight gain. This is because the type of fat in nuts is “healthy” fat.

“In fact, nuts have a tendency to lower body weight and fat mass. In the context of calorie-restricted diets, adding nuts produces a more lasting and greater magnitude of weight loss among obese subjects while improving insulin sensitivity [reducing the likelihood of developing type 2 diabetes].” (*Br J Nutr* 2006;96:79-86.)

And while a separate study involving walnut consumption shows a modest weight gain among participants, the results were “much lower than ex-

pected and became non-significant after controlling for differences in energy intake.” (*Br J Nutr* 2005;94:859-64.)

## Allergy Alert

While nuts are health-boosting for most people, it’s important to note that they can spark moderate to severe allergic reactions in some individuals.

In fact, peanut allergy is the most common cause of fatal and near-fatal reactions to food (*Arch Dis Child* 2002;86:240-44).

So, take care not to serve foods containing nuts to friends or family without first inquiring about nut allergies.

## Shop and Store Smart

When at all possible, choose organic nuts. Non-organic varieties may be contaminated with pesticide residue that may promote cancer and Parkinson’s disease.

Also avoid storing nuts at room temperature. Instead, opt for refrigerating or freezing to avoid oxidation: a process that can produce unhealthy chemical reactions in nuts.

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