The Peanut Institute

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FACT SHEET

Peanuts & Peanut Butter in Perspective: Weight Loss

Almost two-thirds of American adults are overweight (1). However, contrary to popular belief, nut eaters tend to have lower body weights (2). In fact, eating foods full of flavor and healthful fat such as peanuts and peanut butter can lead to weight loss and long-term weight maintenance. Doing so may even improve your risk factors for heart disease.

Research Up-Date:

■ The new word is, "Don't go *too* low-fat." There is new evidence that a higher unsaturated-fat diet helps with weight loss while improving heart disease risk. A new controlled clinical trial compared a low-fat diet to a higher unsaturated-fat diet that provided 35% of calories from fat, half of which came from peanuts, peanut butter, and peanut oil. The low-fat diet provided 20% of calories from fat. Both groups lost similar amounts of weight during the six-week weight-loss period, about 15 pounds, and kept it off for the four-week maintenance period.

However, in terms of heart disease risk factors, the higher unsaturated-fat diet reduced the risk of cardiovascular disease by 14% compared to baseline. Both diets decreased total and low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, but the moderate-fat diet had the added benefit of maintaining "good" high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol, decreasing trigylycerides, and lowering the ratios of total and non-HDL cholesterol to HDL cholesterol throughout weight loss and weight maintenance (3).

■ A moderate-fat, weight-loss diet using peanut butter, nuts, and healthy oils also promotes long-term weight loss (4). Harvard researchers found that people following a Mediterranean-style, moderate-fat, weight-loss diet (35% calories from fat)

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Peanut Portion Pointers: ■ One ounce of peanuts is a small handful, or about 40 pieces. Look for single-serving packets at the store to help with portion control. ■ Two tablespoons of peanut butter is about the size of a ping-pong ball. Keep one on your kitchen counter in your fruit bowl.

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were able to keep weight off for a longer period of time than people on a traditional low-fat diet (20% calories from fat).

Both groups lost an average of 11 pounds at the one-year mark. However, more than 50% of the moderate-fat group stuck with the diet, while only 20% of the low-fat group stuck with the diet. Further, the moderate-fat group kept a significant amount of weight off for 18 months, whereas those who continued in the low-fat group did not. In fact, after two years most people in the low-fat group regained all of their weight and more. Eating satisfying foods with healthful fat like peanut butter and peanuts may help you lose and maintain weight for life.

■ Peanuts provide satiety, or eating satisfaction, which appears to promote weight loss (5). Research has shown that protein and fiber appear to increase satiety. Peanuts contain 6 grams of protein and 2 grams of fiber per ounce. A clinical study showed that when people ate about three ounces of peanuts daily they spontaneously compensated for the extra calories by eating fewer calories from other foods, even when they were told not to (6). Therefore, peanuts appear to curb appetite and may limit caloric intake to promote weight loss as a result.

■ **Diet and Exercise: A Balancing Act**

Eating 3,500 calories more than your body needs causes one pound of weight gain. Therefore, reducing your normal caloric intake by 500 calories a day will result in one pound of weight loss per week. However, expending calories through exercise is essential for maximal weight loss. Experts recommend getting one hour of physical activity per day most days of the week (7). But every little bit helps burn calories to lose weight, so try to increase activity whenever you can. For example, take the stairs, walk to nearby stores, and park far from your destination so you can walk more.

Quick Facts
about Peanuts & Peanut Butter

■ Peanuts and peanut butter fit well into a high-protein, low-carbohydrate diet. They provide 2 grams of fiber and just 4 grams of "net carbs" (total carbohydrates minus fiber).

■ Regular peanut butter contains the same amount of calories as reduced-fat peanut butter and provides more of the "good," heart-healthy unsaturated fat.

Nutrition Facts Label
for Peanut Butter

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size (32g)
Servings Per Container

Amount Per Serving

Calories 190	Calories from Fat 150
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 16g	25%
Saturated Fat 4g	18%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 150mg	6%
Total Carbohydrate 6g	2%
Dietary Fiber 2g	8%
Sugars 3g	
Protein 8g	

Vitamin A 0% • Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 2% • Iron 4%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

References:

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The Peanut Institute is a non-profit organization that supports nutrition research and develops educational programs to encourage healthy lifestyles.

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