



For Immediate Release

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Peanuts Contain Resveratrol - Implicated in Reduced Risk of Heart Disease and Cancer

San Francisco, April 20, -- Peanuts are another dietary source of heart-healthy resveratrol. Dr. Tim Sanders from the USDA Agricultural Research Service in Raleigh, North Carolina presented a lecture on this and other phytochemicals at the Experimental Biology annual meeting in San Francisco.

Resveratrol, which was found in edible peanut kernels, is a naturally occurring plant compound or phytochemical that protects plants from disease. Present in red wine and grapes, one ounce of peanuts contains approximately 73 micrograms of resveratrol. In comparison, almost 6 cups (or 2 pounds) of grapes contain about the same amount of resveratrol. Red wine contains approximately 160 micrograms per fluid ounce.

While it is not yet known exactly how resveratrol functions as a healthful factor, resveratrol's presence in red wine has been previously associated with reduced cardiovascular disease and it has been credited as a factor in the "French Paradox" (despite a high fat diet, the French have a surprisingly low rate of heart disease).

Results from various research studies have shown that resveratrol may protect against atherosclerosis by preventing the oxidation (or breakdown) of the LDL cholesterol in the blood. This oxidation of LDLs starts the deposition of cholesterol in the walls of arteries leading to heart disease. Resveratrol may also prevent platelet accumulation in the arteries. This accumulation of platelets can form a clot which can cause a heart attack or stroke by getting stuck in the artery. If this occurs, blood flow is decreased to the heart or the brain.

More recently, research conducted at the University of Illinois at Chicago using resveratrol extracted from grapes showed a reduced risk of cancer in animals by stopping the growth of damaged cells in the body. If these damaged cells were left untouched, they could grow out of control and cause cancer in the body. Resveratrol may work in a number of ways to stop this series of reactions within the body.

This finding on resveratrol in peanuts appears to support epidemiological studies from Loma Linda University, Harvard School of Public Health and University of Minnesota that show peanuts and nuts may reduce the risk of heart disease by more than half when eaten frequently in small amounts. There may be several factors in peanuts that contribute to this healthful effect. Peanuts are an excellent food source of vitamin E. They also provide approximately 2 grams of fiber per ounce, and have relatively high amounts of folic acid, thiamin, niacin, copper, manganese,

phosphorous, magnesium, and zinc. They are high in plant protein and the fat content is primarily monounsaturated and polyunsaturated.

The Peanut Institute is a non-profit organization that supports nutrition research and develops educational programs to encourage healthful lifestyles. Learn more about peanuts and health at www.peanut-institute.org

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