



For Immediate Release

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**Peanut Eaters Have Better Nutrient and Body Profiles
than Non-Peanut Eaters**

Washington, D.C., April 19, 1999 -- Peanut eaters tend to have higher levels of key nutrients and overall healthier diets than their non-peanut eating counterparts. Furthermore, the body mass index (or BMI, a measure health professionals use in estimating overweightness and chronic disease risk) of peanut eaters was found to be favorable to that of non-peanut eaters. This exciting research was announced at the annual Experimental Biology Conference in Washington, D.C.

Researchers at The Pennsylvania State University examined dietary data collected by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for the Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals (CSFII) from 1994-1996. They found that the overall nutrient profile of the diets was significantly greater for men and women peanut users compared to non users. Overall, the peanut eaters achieved higher Recommended Daily Allowances (RDAs) for many important nutrients, such as vitamin E, potassium and magnesium, and had significantly higher intakes of fiber. Cholesterol intake was lower in peanut eaters as well.

The amount of fat and calories in the peanut eaters' diets was slightly higher than the non-peanut eaters, but still in the range of the average American diet. The extra fat in the peanut eaters' diets was mainly heart healthy monounsaturated fat, which has been shown to lower cholesterol. In a clinical trial at Penn State, Dr. Penny Kris-Etherton found that diets including monounsaturated fat from peanuts, peanut butter and peanut oil were as effective in lowering cholesterol levels as diets with olive oil.

The study looked at the dietary habits of American adults over a two day period. 24% of the people surveyed consumed peanuts; 13% (or half of the peanut eaters) consumed peanuts as peanut butter, 9% as a sweet snack such as candy bars, 3% as a savory snack such as peanut butter crackers, and 1.7% as snack peanuts.

During the study period (1994-1996), many people avoided eating nuts due to their fat content. Yet, BMI of the peanut users was found to be lower than that of the non-peanuts users. This finding is consistent with several large population studies. For example, results from the Harvard University Nurses' Health Study found that women who frequently (four or more times a week) consumed peanuts, nuts and peanut butter were leaner than those who rarely consumed nuts and reduced their risk of heart disease by approximately 35%. Now you can feel good about enjoying favorite foods like peanuts and peanut butter- nature's power snacks!

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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