



For Immediate Release

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**GOOD FAT PEANUT DIET BEATS LOW-FAT DIET
FOR HEART HEALTH**

ARLINGTON, VA, November 22, 1999 -- A ground-breaking study published in the December issue of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* may change the dietary advice that has been given to Americans for more than two decades. The landmark study tested diets high in "good" monounsaturated fat (MUFA) -- like the fat found in Peanuts -- against a low-fat diet and the average American diet. The study found that diets high in MUFA from foods like peanuts, peanut butter, peanut oil and olive oil are superior to a low-fat diet for heart health. Diets high "good" fat improve several risk factors for heart disease including total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, HDL cholesterol and triglycerides.

The study, conducted by Dr. Penny Kris-Etherton and researchers at Penn State University showed that a diet with peanuts and peanut butter reduced risk of heart disease by 21% while the low-fat diet reduced it by only 12%. Dr. Kris-Etherton adds, "Our study shows that people can now include some of their favorite foods, peanuts and peanut butter, in a high-mono, heart-healthy diet and achieve even better results than with a low-fat diet."

The goal of currently recommended low-fat diets is to lower saturated fat (found in butter, animal products and full-fat dairy products) and replace it with carbohydrate. While this approach reduces total and bad LDL cholesterol, it also has the negative effect of raising triglycerides and lowering good HDL cholesterol, which is used by the body to carry the bad LDL cholesterol away. "What's really new and very exciting is these peanut diets will lower triglycerides -- an emerging risk factor for heart disease -- compared to the average American diet and even a low-fat diet," says Dr. Kris-Etherton

This new study, *High-Monounsaturated Fatty Acid Diets Lower Both Plasma Cholesterol And Triacylglycerol Concentrations*, is important because it shows that another food source rich in MUFAs, peanuts and peanut products, can be used in designing heart-healthy diets. Peanuts contain just one quarter of the carbohydrates found in other snack foods like pretzels and chips, and three times as much protein. During the six month study, subjects used peanut butter instead of butter on bagels and toast and snacked on peanuts instead of high carbohydrate snacks like rice cakes and popcorn.

The article goes on to say that, "Because peanuts and peanut products also are a rich source of other nutrients, their inclusion in the diet can favorably effect the nutrient profile of the diet." Besides monounsaturated fats, peanuts and peanut butter contain many other heart-healthy nutrients such as vitamin E, folic acid, soluble fiber, arginine, plant sterols, copper, zinc, selenium and magnesium.

In the past few years, several large, long-term population studies have shown that eating one serving of nuts or peanut butter five or more times per week can reduce the risk of heart disease by 50%.

This current study shows that not all fats are created equal. It states that, "from a public health perspective, it is now timely to reevaluate what the optimal diet is for lowering risk of cardiovascular Disease."

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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