



For Immediate Release

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Contact:

Pat Kearney

(703) 841-1600

pmk@pmkassociates.com

PEANUTS AND PEANUT BUTTER FOUND TO SUPPRESS HUNGER

September 18, 2000, Albany, GA -- A new study shows that snacking on peanuts and peanut butter is an effective way to control hunger without leading to weight gain. Subjects who snacked on peanuts and peanut butter self-adjusted their caloric intake spontaneously and did not add extra calories to their daily diets. These findings are published in this month's *International Journal of Obesity* (Vol. 24, p.1167-75).

Following a snack of peanuts or peanut butter, the participants' hunger was reduced for two and a half hours. When they were fed typical portions of other snacks (such as rice cakes), hunger returned within a half hour. Furthermore, there was a positive change in the mix of fat in subjects' daily diets when they consumed peanuts and peanut butter. Mono- and polyunsaturated fats increased proportionately and saturated fat decreased proportionately, providing an overall heart-healthier fat profile. Rick Mattes, PhD, RD, Professor in the Department of Foods and Nutrition at Purdue University, who conducted the study, says, "These findings are important because they challenge the belief that eating high-fat foods like peanuts and peanut butter necessarily will lead to weight gain." These new findings also support previous long- and short-term studies that indicate that regular consumption of peanuts does not promote weight gain and can reduce the risk of heart disease.

Small changes can equal big rewards. Substitute monounsaturated fats for saturated fats by using peanut butter on your bagel instead of butter or cream cheese, dipping vegetables and fruit in melted peanut butter instead of cream-based dressings, or sprinkling toasted peanuts on salads instead of croutons. When researchers at Penn State University (*American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*) tested diets that included 2-3 servings daily of peanuts or peanut butter, rich in monounsaturated fats (MUFA), they found that total and LDL cholesterol was lowered by 11-14%. The peanut diets reduced the risk of cardiovascular disease by 21% compared to the average American diet, whereas a low-fat diet reduced the risk by only 12%.

Peanuts and peanut products also contain the phytosterol beta-sitosterol (SIT), which has been shown to inhibit cancer growth and protect against heart disease. SIT may offer protection from colon, prostate and breast cancer, all of which tend to occur at higher rates in Americans than in other populations. This exciting new research was recently published in the journal *Nutrition and Cancer*. In addition, *The Journal of Nutrition* review of phytosterols as anticancer dietary components concludes, "The best dietary sources of phytosterols are unrefined plant oils, seeds, nuts and legumes."

In addition to a significant amount of phytosterols and heart healthy monounsaturated fat, peanuts and peanut butter also contain vitamin E, folate, potassium, magnesium, zinc, and fiber, all of which are thought to benefit health.

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 <http://www.peanut-institute.org>

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