



**For Immediate Release**

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**Peanuts and Peanut Butter Hit Target in New  
National Academies of Science Recommendations for Healthy Eating**

*Albany, GA, September 6, 2002* -- For the first time, the Institute of Medicine's National Academies of Science offers a range of optimal intakes for the macronutrients fat, protein, and carbohydrate and sets daily fiber goals for men and women. These new recommendations give consumers flexibility in meeting their daily energy and nutrient needs while minimizing their risk of chronic disease. The panel also emphasizes energy balance and recommends one hour of moderate physical activity per day. Much of the research supported by The Peanut Institute over the last several years aligns peanuts and peanut butter with these new public health recommendations.

**The Right Fats**

The report recommends a range of healthy fat intake from 20-35% of calories as opposed to focusing on a limit of 30% fat in the diet. The panel notes that studies have shown when people eat very low levels of fat and very high levels of carbohydrates their good HDL cholesterol levels decline, increasing the risk of heart disease. The report goes on to say that mono- and poly-unsaturated fats reduce blood cholesterol levels and thus lower risk of heart disease when they replace saturated fats in the diet. In one clinical study, diets higher in unsaturated fats from peanuts, peanut butter, peanut oil and olive oil were compared to a low-fat diet and the average American diet. Researchers found that the diet with peanuts and peanut butter reduced the risk of cardiovascular disease by 21%, while the low-fat diet reduced the risk by just 12%.

In addition, the report says that saturated fat and trans fat intake should be as low as possible while still maintaining a nutritionally adequate diet. Peanuts and peanut butter are low in saturated fat, and a USDA study found that peanut butter has undetectable levels of trans fats even though labels list partially hydrogenated oil as a minor ingredient.

**Protein**

The recommendation for the range of protein is 10-35% of calories. Peanuts and peanut butter provide plant protein along with healthy fats versus the saturated fat found in many sources of animal protein. Peanuts contain about 7 grams of plant protein per serving and peanut butter provides about 8 grams per serving. Both are rich in the amino acid arginine, which preliminary research shows may help prevent heart disease by keeping blood vessels open.

**Fiber**

The new report recommends 25 grams of fiber per day for women under 50 years and 38 grams of fiber per day for men under 50 years (the goals for over 50 years are 21 grams for women and

30 grams for men). The report says that diets low in fiber are associated with an increased risk of heart disease.

Peanuts contain two grams of fiber per one-ounce serving. Peanut butter on a slice of whole grain bread provides about four grams of fiber. One of America's favorite lunches is also one of the healthiest!

### **Energy Balance**

Balancing caloric intake with caloric expenditure is essential to good health. Research has shown that peanuts and peanut butter produced more eating satisfaction and feelings of fullness than high-carbohydrate snacks, such as rice cakes. When subjects were fed peanut snacks, they self-adjusted their caloric intakes and did not add extra calories to their daily diet. A recently published study in the *International Journal of Obesity* showed that when people ate peanuts, they naturally decreased what they ate at other times of the day.

This clinical study helps to explain a body of epidemiological data showing that peanut and peanut butter eaters tend to have a lower body mass index (BMI) than non-nut-eaters. In large population studies such as the Seventh Day Adventist Study and the Nurses' Health Study, researchers found that people who consumed about an ounce of peanuts, nuts, and peanut butter frequently had lower BMI scores.

### **Bonus Nutrients**

In addition to containing good unsaturated fat, plant protein and fiber, peanuts provide vitamin E, folate, potassium, magnesium, and zinc - all which are thought to be important to health. Peanuts also contain bioactive components such as phytosterols, resveratrol, flavonoids, and antioxidants, the benefits of which nutrition scientists are only beginning to discover. And, like all plant foods, peanuts and peanut butter are naturally cholesterol-free.

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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