



For Immediate Release

January 12, 2005

Contact:

Pat Kearney

(703) 841-1600

pmk@pmkassociates.com

**PEANUT BUTTER, PEANUTS A DELICIOUS,
CONVENIENT AND INEXPENSIVE WAY TO MEET
NEW DIETARY GUIDELINES**

January 12, 2005, Alexandria, VA -- Eating peanut butter and peanuts is a great way to meet the new Dietary Guidelines released today by Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Ann Veneman. Peanut butter and peanuts are nutrient-dense foods that have good fats and can be considered part of the "Fruits and Vegetables" group, as outlined by the Dietary Guidelines.

Peanuts - Nutrient Dense Food

For the first time, the Dietary Guidelines include a focus on eating nutrient-dense foods to improve health and reduce the risk of chronic disease. The guidelines identify several nutrients that are lacking in American diets, including vitamin A, vitamin E, vitamin C, calcium, magnesium, potassium and fiber. A new survey of USDA data shows that one way for men, women and children alike to meet these nutrient needs is to eat just one serving of peanut butter or peanuts per day.

A daily dose of a small handful of peanuts or a two-tablespoon serving of peanut butter is a convenient and inexpensive way for Americans to get many of the nutrients they are lacking. The USDA study showed that peanut butter and peanut eaters had increased levels of vitamin A, vitamin E, folate, calcium, magnesium, zinc, iron and dietary fiber in their diets. While the multivitamin and supplement industry continues to boom, the Dietary Guidelines identify whole foods that can give Americans the nutrients they need. For example, peanuts are identified as a good source of magnesium and peanut butter is identified as a good source of vitamin E. Americans consume about half of the fiber they need daily. Peanut butter and peanuts each contain about 2 grams of beneficial fiber per serving. Children who eat two or more servings of peanut butter or peanuts per day consume twice as much fiber compared to children who ate little or none, according to the USDA study.

Peanuts Include Good Fats

The new Guidelines are clear in recommending that consumers should keep trans fats as low as possible, keep saturated fat to less than 10% of calories, and lower cholesterol. Equally as important as lowering "bad" fats is choosing "good" fats. The guidelines say, "Keep total fat intake between 20 to 35 percent of calories, with most fats coming from sources of polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fatty acids, such as fish, nuts, and vegetable oils."

A study at Harvard School of Public Health and Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston found that when participants followed a Mediterranean-style, moderate-fat, weight-loss diet, they were not only able to keep weight off for a longer period of time than those following the traditionally recommended low-fat diet, but they also increased healthy fats, fiber and other important nutrients in their diets. The moderate-fat dieters increased their vegetable consumption by one serving per day and increased their peanut butter consumption by almost a serving each day, compared to baseline.

Peanuts Help to Control Calorie Intake for Weight Management

Eating peanut butter and peanuts is an easy way to control calorie intake. A serving of peanuts is simply a handful and is only 160 calories. And a serving of peanut butter (2 tablespoons) contains 190 calories -- just enough to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. In addition, studies show that peanuts and peanut butter satisfy hunger longer than other foods.

Research has consistently shown that although peanuts and peanut butter are considered higher-fat foods, they do not necessarily lead to weight gain. In fact, studies show that the opposite is true. A Harvard School of Public Health's Nurses' Health Study has shown that women who consumed more nuts and peanuts tended to weigh less, and in a USDA survey of over 10,000 Americans, peanut and peanut butter-eaters tended to have lower body mass indexes (BMI), a measure of body fat based on height and weight. Research is underway to further understand the role that peanuts play in weight control.

Peanuts Help to Increase Daily Intake of Fruits and Vegetables

The guidelines also recommend that Americans consume a greater variety of fruits and vegetables in their diet to meet nutrient needs. Peanuts, although usually called a "nut," are technically legumes, a high-fiber, high-protein category that the Dietary Guidelines place under the "Fruits and Vegetables" group. The Dietary Guidelines recommend eating 5-13 servings per day, depending on calorie needs. To increase the variety of foods in your diet, consider eating a peanut butter sandwich on whole grain bread and perhaps adding bananas or raisins to it.

Peanuts and peanut butter represent over two-thirds of the "nuts" eaten in the U.S. Peanuts and peanut butter are cholesterol-free and according to USDA research, commercial peanut butter can be labeled "zero grams trans fat." Peanuts also contain phytochemicals like resveratrol, found in red wine and grapes, and peanut products contain beta-sitosterol, a phytosterol that has been shown to inhibit cancer cell growth and reduce the risk of heart 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

###