



For Immediate Release

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**Choosing Plant Protein and Healthy Fat
Like That Found in Peanuts and Peanut Butter
Reduces Coronary Heart Disease Risk in Women**

Alexandria, VA, November 9, 2006 – A new study today in the *New England Journal of Medicine* shows that eating a lower carbohydrate diet, high in protein and healthy fats from plants, reduces the risk of coronary heart disease (CHD) in women. This new study from data collected over 20 years from 82,802 women in the Nurses' Health Study supports the large body of evidence that shows the beneficial effects of plant-based dietary patterns. Researchers concluded that a diet higher in protein and fat is good for you, but it's best when the protein and fat come from plant sources.

Peanuts and peanut butter provide both kinds of healthy fats from plants – monounsaturated and polyunsaturated. They also provide plant protein. In fact, peanuts are actually legumes and have the highest protein of any nut. Peanuts are the most commonly eaten nut in America, and when peanut butter is factored in, they comprise over 2/3 of the nut consumption in the U.S. Peanut butter is the most frequently consumed plant protein in the U.S., particularly as a peanut butter sandwich. When combined with whole grain bread and eaten with fresh fruits and vegetables, peanut butter is part of an ideal meal or snack on the go. As an inexpensive protein source, peanuts and peanut butter contribute to healthy diets throughout the lifespan – from childhood to old age.

In the study, data from validated food frequency questionnaires were used to calculate a low-carbohydrate-diet score. Higher scores, which were better in terms of CHD risk, reflected a higher intake of fat and protein. Frank Hu, MD, of the Harvard School of Public Health said, "optimal diets included lower levels of refined carbohydrate and healthy plant sources of protein and fat." Peanuts and peanut butter are some of the most frequent sources of plant protein in the U.S., but they also bring healthy fats and many critical nutrients. Peanuts and peanut

butter are high in magnesium, zinc, folate, niacin and chromium to name a few. In addition, special bioactive compounds like resveratrol are found in peanuts.

High in healthy unsaturated fats, peanuts and peanut butter are great replacements for saturated fat in the diet. Regular consumption of peanuts, peanut butter, and peanut oil has been shown in previous clinically controlled studies to decrease total and bad cholesterol levels and to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.

In addition, peanuts have low glycemic index and load values. To put it in perspective on a zero to 100-point scale, peanuts have a GI of 14 and a GL of 1, whereas pretzels have a GI of 83 and a GL of 17. A lower GI keeps blood glucose and insulin levels more stable and from going to extremes. Results from the study above also showed that eating a higher glycemic load was strongly associated with an increased risk of CHD. Results showed that the “overall dietary glycemic index had a direct association with the risk of CHD.”

Peanuts and peanut butter fit into a low carbohydrate diet, high in plant protein and healthy fats. Regularly eating peanuts and peanut butter can be a great way to get plant protein, healthy fats, and many important nutrients. What’s even better is that peanuts and peanut butter are inexpensive and versatile, and they don’t perish as part of on-the-go snacks and meals any part of the day.

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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