Peanuts are now among the elite list of foods certified by the American Heart Association (AHA) as heart-healthy and eligible for the easily-recognized AHA Heart Check logo on their packages. Research shows that the Heart Check mark is the most recognized food symbol on the market today. A majority of grocery shoppers trust the Heart Check most to guide them in making heart-healthy food purchases.¹

AHA-certified foods must meet specific nutritional levels. Raw peanuts, oil roasted unsalted oil roasted salted peanuts meet

To get the Heart Check, nuts saturated fat per 50 grams, less serving, no cholesterol, 140 mg and 10% or more Daily Value of like fiber.² (See the chart below to stack up.)

The AHA stamp of approval for peanuts is another major acknowledgement of the heart healthfulness of peanuts. In 2003, peanuts received the FDA Qualified Health Claim that states, “Scientific evidence suggests but does not prove that eating 1.5 ounces of most nuts, such as peanuts, as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease.”³

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AHA Heart Check Nutritional Requirements for Nuts²</th>
<th>Oil Roasted Peanuts, Salt Added (1 oz. or 28 g)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Fat</td>
<td>No limit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturated Fat</td>
<td>≤ 4 g (per 50 g)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trans Fat</td>
<td>&lt; 0.5 g (per label serving)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol</td>
<td>0 mg (per label serving)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium</td>
<td>≤ 140 mg (per label serving)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiber</td>
<td>≥ 10% of Daily Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No limit</td>
<td>14.7 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≤ 4 g</td>
<td>2 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 0.5 g</td>
<td>0 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 mg</td>
<td>0 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≤ 140 mg</td>
<td>119 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≥ 10% of Daily Value</td>
<td>10% Daily Value</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even in people with an already-high risk of heart disease, such as those with Type 2 diabetes, peanuts have beneficial effects. A study of 6,000 women with Type 2 diabetes found decreased risk for heart disease when nuts, including peanuts and peanut butter, were consumed at least five times a week. Lower total and LDL cholesterol were also associated with frequent nut consumption.⁴

At-Risk Populations

Even in people with an already-high risk of heart disease, such as those with Type 2 diabetes, peanuts have beneficial effects. A study of 6,000 women with Type 2 diabetes found decreased risk for heart disease when nuts, including peanuts and peanut butter, were consumed at least five times a week. Lower total and LDL cholesterol were also associated with frequent nut consumption.⁴

DID YOU KNOW?

See how oil roasted salted peanuts stack up.

www.peanut-institute.org
SURPRISE!
PEANUTS HAVE LESS SALT than these common snacks

Oil roasted, salted peanuts contain less sodium than you would think. Even more surprising is how oil roasted salted peanuts compare to some common snacks in sodium content.5

DID you know

When you eat peanuts, you actually consume even less sodium than the package indicates because the salt on the surface rubs off on the package and your fingers.
A handful of peanuts every day can REDUCE YOUR RISK OF HEART DISEASE

While the Heart Check-approved nutrient numbers speak for themselves, science shows that peanuts really do help protect heart health. Four large studies, totaling over 160,000 men and women, showed that more frequent nut and peanut consumption is linked to lower heart disease risk. As a whole, the studies showed an average risk reduction of death from heart disease by 50%.6

Decreased risk of heart disease with more frequent peanut consumption.6

The graph on the right shows the combined results from four large studies. They show that increasing frequency of nut and peanut eating proportionally decreases heart disease risk.

The positive effect of peanuts on heart disease risk may be due in part to their effect on cholesterol. Peanut consumption lowers total cholesterol, “bad” LDL cholesterol, and triglycerides.6,7 Peanuts have also been shown to raise “good” HDL cholesterol.8 Peanuts are full of healthy monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, which are known to benefit LDL and HDL cholesterol.

**Healthy Oils**
Increase HDL cholesterol and may decrease LDL cholesterol as well as triglycerides, which can increase risk of CVD if too high.

**Protein**
The right amount and right kind of protein is good for the heart and can lower bad cholesterol.

**Arginine**
L-arginine works by increasing production of Nitric Oxide, which increases circulation through vasodilation. By improving circulation, it can decrease an individual’s risk for certain heart diseases.

**Fiber**
Good sources of fiber daily can reduce the risk of heart disease and lower blood cholesterol.

**Folate**
Functions in the body to help maintain and produce new cells. Folate intake can reduce blood vessel damage and heart disease.

**Vitamin E**
Inhibits the oxidation of LDL cholesterol and atherosclerosis. Also, can prevent the formation of blood clots, heart attack or thrombosis.

**Potassium**
Delivers blood through the body and helps the heart beat. Diets with potassium can decrease cholesterol and blood pressure.

**Magnesium**
Regulates heart rhythm, controls blood pressure and limits complications of Congestive Heart Failure as well as pre-diabetes/diabetes. Increasing magnesium may prevent formation and the movement of blood clots.

Peanuts' NUTRIENT DENSITY CONTRIBUTES TO HEART HEALTH

Other components in peanuts also likely contribute to the heart disease-lowering effect. An animal study showed that fat-free peanut flour reduced total cholesterol and non-HDL cholesterol to the same extent as peanuts and peanut oil. The results suggest that in addition to healthy fat, other bioactive ingredients in peanuts improve heart disease risk factors.5 For example, peanuts are rich in antioxidants, including Vitamin E and polyphenols, which have protective effects on LDL cholesterol.10 These antioxidants also counteract inflammation and arterial damage, conditions that contribute to heart disease development.10
A study done at Penn State University and published in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition looked at the effects of five different diets on heart health. It compared the Average American diet, which is high in saturated fat, to four other diets. One of the comparison diets was low in total fat (American Heart Association/National Cholesterol Education Program 25% fat diet). The other three were approximately 35% total fat, with 18% from foods high in monounsaturated fat, such as peanuts, peanut butter, peanut oil, or olive oil.

The Penn State study found the diet that included peanuts and peanut butter lowered cardiovascular disease risk by 21%, whereas the low-fat diet decreased the risk by only 12%. The higher monounsaturated fat diets and the low-fat diet all lowered total cholesterol by about 11% and LDL cholesterol by 14% within a month. However, the peanut diets and olive oil diet had the added benefit of reducing triglycerides by 13% (vs. an 11% increase with the low-fat diet) and maintaining good HDL cholesterol (vs. a 4% decrease with the low fat diet).11

References
1. American Heart Association Quantitative Study http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/HeartSmartShopping/Heart-Check-Mark-for-Food-Manufacturers_UCM_300866_Article.jsp?Tw350UZ9xRE
2. American Heart Association http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/NutritionCenter/HeartSmartShopping/Heart-Check-Mark-Nutritional-Guidelines_UCM_300914_Article.jsp?Tw3tX_J99oM