Eating Peanuts Can Help You Live Longer!

A new study has shown once again that nut consumption—especially peanut consumption—can boost longevity. Using a large number of participants consuming mostly peanuts, the study showed that consuming peanuts not only reduces death from many different causes, but also reduces the risk of death overall. While similar results have been shown before in higher income, caucasian populations, this is the first study to produce these results in high-risk individuals from lower socioeconomic status.

This large study was conducted by Vanderbilt University, and included over 200,000 participants from the Southeastern United States and Shanghai, China. The participants provided information about their nut intake by responding to food frequency questionnaires. A combination of national registries and mortality files were used to follow up on mortality and cause of death for each of the participants.

The participants in the study were primarily overweight with multiple risk factors for disease and death. Despite this, peanut eaters from all ethnic groups significantly reduced their risk of death as compared to non nut-eaters. Americans who consumed peanuts regularly were 21% less likely to die sooner, and the Chinese peanut eaters reduced their risk of death by 17% compared to non nut-eaters. These results are remarkably consistent with those seen in a 2013 study, which found that peanut and nut consumers reduced their risk of death by 20%.

There was even more good news when researchers looked specifically at the relationship between peanut consumption and death from cardiovascular disease. Americans of African descent, who consumed the largest amount of peanuts, reduced their risk of death from cardiovascular disease by 23% compared to those who did not consume any nuts; Americans of European descent reduced their risk by 38%. Asian peanut consumers reduced their risk of death from cardiovascular disease by 24% compared to non nut-eaters. These associations were seen regardless of whether participants were smokers, drank alcohol, had existing metabolic conditions or were overweight or underweight.
PEANUTS ARE packed WITH ANTI-AGING NUTRIENTS

Peanuts are rich in anti-oxidant nutrients\(^3\), which may be why they help us to live longer and better. They are a source of plant proteins, unsaturated fatty acids, fiber, phytosterols, polyphenols, and other antioxidants\(^4\). All of these compounds help to reduce the burden of oxidative stress on the body, which is otherwise known to accelerate the aging process.

ARGinine\(^5\) is an amino acid, and precursor to nitric oxide, which helps to reduce blood pressure by expanding blood vessels. Peanuts have more arginine than any other food.

RESVERATROL\(^6,7\) has long been touted as an anti-aging compound, and is most commonly found in red wine. However, peanuts are one of the few foods that contain very high amounts of resveratrol.

PHYTOSTEROLS\(^8\) block the formation of cholesterol in the body, and may decrease inflammation.

POLYPHENOLS\(^9,10\) work as antioxidants to help prevent damage in the body that can lead to heart disease and cancer. Peanuts are 17% polyphenols by weight.

FOLIC ACID\(^11\) is important for the growth of cells and tissues, but it also helps to reduce the risk of heart disease.

UNSATURATED FATTY ACIDS\(^12,13\) have consistently been shown to reduce the risk of heart disease by decreasing LDL (bad) cholesterol and increased HDL (good) cholesterol.

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Let’s Hear it for the Peanut Gallery!

Arginine | Resveratrol | Phytosterols
Polyphenols | Folic Acid | Unsaturated fatty acids
The evidence was so strong that the Editor of JAMA wrote, “it was worth publishing another study for 2 reasons. First, this study’s combined 3 cohorts produced a large and diverse sample, including a predominantly low socioeconomic cohort of Americans and 2 Chinese cohorts. The authors found that higher nut intake was associated with lower mortality in all 3 cohorts. The consistency of the results between the cohorts and with prior studies that have been performed in higher income populations increases our confidence that the beneficial effects of nuts are not due to other lifestyle characteristics of nut eaters. Second, in the 2 Asian cohorts, nuts were limited to peanuts because there was very little tree nut consumption in these groups. This is important because peanuts are cheap and ubiquitous (and can be ground into delicious peanut butter!). They can help us live longer at an affordable price.”

Mitchell H. Katz, MD, Editor, JAMA Internal Medicine, May 2015
PB&J KALE mindSMOOTHIE

Ingredients:
- 1/2c frozen or fresh blueberries
- 1/2c frozen or fresh strawberries
- 1/2c kale, ripped into small pieces
- 2 TBSP peanut butter
- 1/2c seltzer
- 1/2c ice

Instructions:
Combine all ingredients in a blender until smooth. Enjoy!

*Recipe by Pamela Reed of Brooklyn Farm Girl (www.abesmarket.com)

References