

Snacking your way to health

Everyone loves a snack. But not all snacks love us.

The ideal snack, it's agreed by young and old, is the proud peanut, a tasty legume that comes in its own eco-friendly package.

Snacks, of course, should only be eaten as part of an overall healthy diet. But it helps if your snack is also nutritious. You shouldn't rely on snacks that build up cholesterol, pump up bad fats, or deliver too many carbohydrates.

That's why peanuts are an ideal snack food.

"Peanuts are a good snack food because they keep you satisfied and not feeling hungry, longer than other snack foods such as potato chips," says Patrick Archer, president of the American Peanut Council.

The nutrition profile of peanuts is impressive. A single serving of dry-roasted peanuts (30 grams) delivers essential vitamins and minerals, with a fat content that is 85 per cent "good" or unsaturated. Cholesterol? Zero. Trans-fatty acids? Zero. And depending on your choice, low in or free entirely of sodium.

The fat profile of peanuts is similar to olive oil. This helps account for the popularity of peanuts in the trend to "Mediterranean-type" diets which have gained such wide popularity among Canadian consumers.

For a snack of crackers or toast, there's no better condiment than peanut butter as a nutritious supplement to a healthy diet.

Yet another healthy snack alternative is peanuts and fruit mixes, now available in new combinations.

Progressive merchants know that innovative displays of peanuts and peanut products bring greater sales. The Peanut Bureau of Canada is keen to work with you to help you promote healthier snacking.



Helping the hungry – the peanut story



“Peanut Butter for the Hungry” is a unique program developed by U.S. peanut growers, shellers, manufacturers and their allies to help malnourished children around the world.

The key ingredient: a unique therapeutic food product that combines peanuts with powdered milk in a new F-100 milk formula that is both shelf stable and transportable. It replaces liquid milk products (often subject to contamination with infected water) with a protein-rich formula that is bacteria-free and needs no refrigeration.



Field studies report 90 per cent success in treating children six months to two years, the most vulnerable age group in impoverished regions.

Mothers are able to give their children F-100 milk at home, eliminating the need for treatment of malnourished children in hospitals.

The combination of peanut butter with powdered milk delivers the needed amounts of vitamins and minerals for healthy growth in early childhood.

The peanut industry has put both financial and intellectual resources into “Peanut Butter for the Hungry.”

The program provides U.S.-grown peanut butter where needed and encourages the development of local production facilities in such places as Haiti and Africa.



To learn more about the versatility, taste and health benefits of Quality USA peanuts – and to find a selection of delicious recipes visit:

www.peanutbureau.ca or e-mail info@peanutbureau.ca



Embracing the Mediterranean diet

Peanut products are an important food for Canadians who have embraced the popular “Mediterranean-type” diet of fruit and vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts, fish, and modest amounts of red meat and dairy products.

Research findings have confirmed the benefits of the Mediterranean diet which relies on unsaturated fat, available in abundance from such products as peanuts and olive oil.

It's a convenient and healthy alternative to the traditional Western diet that has relied on foods containing refined carbohydrates and sugars and saturated fats from red meats and high fat dairy products.

The inclusion of peanuts in the Mediterranean diet – whether eaten as a snack, as peanut butter, or in salads or in various dishes – is an effective way of overcoming the high-glycaemic load of our traditional diet, according to nutritionists.

McMaster University in Canada reviewed more than 200 health studies and found a cause and effect relationship between diet and coronary heart disease (CHD) and type 2 diabetes. Numerous other studies have come to similar conclusions.

The McMaster review reaffirms the position of peanuts as part of a beneficial eating pattern like the Mediterranean diet.

Many other studies have identified the role of peanuts as a contributor to health. The Harvard Physicians' Health Study found a lower incidence of hypertension among U.S. doctors reporting frequent nut consumption.

The popularity of the Mediterranean eating pattern, and the positive health effects that it delivers, underscore the peanut's contribution to a nutritious diet and a healthy lifestyle.



Peanuts and salt? Here's the answer.



Canadians consume too much sodium, according to a coalition of prestigious health organizations. It has alerted consumers across the country and is urging the food industry to reduce sodium levels in products.

The average Canadian consumes more than 3000 milligrams a day of sodium, according to Statistics Canada. That's 30 per cent over the daily recommended intake of 2300 milligrams.

But peanuts and peanut products should not figure as targets of the campaign to cut down on sodium.

“A common misconception is that peanuts and peanut butter are high in sodium,” says American Peanut Council president, Patrick Archer. “The reality is that a Food Guide serving (60 mL or a small handful) of unsalted peanuts is sodium-free. And peanut butter contains much less sodium than you think.”

Facts about peanuts and sodium:

- Most peanut butter contains less than 140 milligrams of sodium per serving and is considered “low in sodium” by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.
- Salted, oil-roasted peanuts contain 117 milligrams of sodium per Food Guide serving – less than in a slice of bread or a bagel.
- Sodium-free peanuts are available for cooking or in snacks – and should be stocked by every retailer.

On the positive side, peanuts and peanut butter provide more than a dozen essential nutrients including protein, B-vitamins, folate, fibre, Vitamin E and magnesium. And they're cholesterol and gluten-free.

Canadians concerned about their salt intake can choose the lower-sodium version of all foods, along with plenty of vegetables, fruit, and unsalted peanuts and peanut butter.



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Good eating partners – peanuts, vitamins and low fat

Peanuts deliver. Peanuts and peanut products deliver what's best in vitamins and essential minerals. And the fact their fat content is overwhelmingly of the "good" variety – monounsaturated and polyunsaturated – makes peanuts an ideal part of a healthy diet.

Consumers are accustomed to examining the more detailed nutrition labels now appearing on Canadian food products, including peanut butter. Peanuts don't have labels, but they do have many of the essential nutrients of a healthy diet.

Essential vitamins and minerals

Peanuts are rich in:

- **Vitamin B1 (Thiamin)** – Helps the body convert carbohydrates into energy, promotes good heart and muscle function. Without it, eyesight, mental alertness, physical coordination suffer.
- **Vitamin B3 (Niacin)** – Supports proper blood circulation, healthy skin, and the central nervous system.
- **Magnesium** – Critical to growth and formation of bones and muscles. Helps the body absorb calcium and potassium. Two tablespoons of peanut butter deliver 15 per cent of needed daily intake.
- **Folate** – Essential in production of normal red blood cells. Helps keep heart and blood vessels healthy. Especially important in pregnancy.
- **Vitamin E** – A key antioxidant, protects Vitamin A and other essential fatty acids, forestalls breakdown of body tissue. Antioxidants defend against heart disease, prostate and other cancers, and arthritis.

What's good and bad in fats?

Canada's Food Guide tells us to limit fat to 30 per cent of our caloric intake. But the *kind* of fat we eat is just as important as *how much* we eat.

Saturated fat is bad. Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat is good. Of the fat in peanuts, 85 per cent is of the good variety – the kinds of fat we need for heart health and cholesterol control. And peanuts are virtually free of trans fats! Truly, peanuts are a natural wonder.



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Food allergy facts

The number of Canadians believed to suffer from food allergies is estimated at one to five per cent of the population, based on the occurrence of reported cases. Common foods associated with allergies include milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, wheat and soy.

Current medical research is focused on development of tests that will accurately identify individuals most likely to be at risk. This will make it easier to develop avoidance strategies. The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology has reported that scientists at the University of Manchester have developed a test that can identify 97 per cent of those at risk of anaphylaxis from exposure to peanuts.

What is a food allergy?

A food allergy is any reaction to an otherwise harmless food or food component that involves the body's immune system. A reaction occurs when the body's immune system responds abnormally to the protein or proteins in that particular food. The body reacts by flooding the system with histamines and other chemicals to fight off what is perceived as an invader in the body.

Can anyone develop a food allergy?

Although anyone can develop a food allergy, the tendency toward allergic reactions is largely inherited. Where there is a history of atopic disorders (such as asthma or eczema) or other allergies, children may have two to four times the likelihood of developing an allergy.

How easy is it to identify the symptoms of a food allergy?

Most allergy sufferers experience mild reactions. Symptoms can include varying degrees of hives, swelling of the throat, difficulty breathing and vomiting. A small proportion of susceptible sufferers may experience severe and potentially fatal anaphylactic shock.

Anaphylaxis is the life-threatening reaction induced by severe allergies that can constrict the airways in the lungs, severely lower blood pressure, and swell the tongue or throat, among other symptoms. Anaphylaxis is rare, but can be fatal if not treated immediately. It can be caused by foods, insect stings and medications.



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Key contacts

For any questions you may have about the U.S. peanut industry, the Peanut Bureau of Canada or the American Peanut Council, please contact:

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