

# Nutrition for LIFE

## Nuts



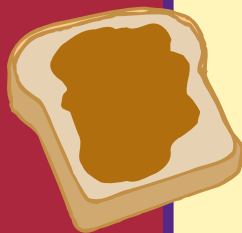
**Nuts have been an important food for people for many years. Recently, some people started avoiding nuts because of their high fat content. Now we know that nuts can be part of a healthy diet. Nuts have “healthy” fats, are packed with other nutrients, and are also tasty and convenient!**

### HEALTHY FATS FOR YOUR HEART

Nuts have a good ratio of unsaturated to saturated fat and cholesterol. Cholesterol and saturated fat raise LDL or “bad” blood cholesterol levels. Unsaturated fats include polyunsaturated, monounsaturated and omega-3 fatty acids. All of these fats can help protect your heart by keeping up the levels of HDL or “good” blood cholesterol.

### PART OF YOUR HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Nuts are in the meat and beans group on the USDA Food Guide, MyPyramid. MyPyramid recommends 5-6 ounces of protein equivalent each day for most adults. An ounce equivalent would be 1 ounce or meat, poultry or chicken, 1 egg, or 1/2 ounce of nuts (12 almonds, 24 pistachios, 7 walnuts halves). Varying your protein sources to include nuts can increase your intake of healthy fats, fiber and vitamin E. When substituted for the other protein sources, you can eat nuts and still maintain a healthy weight.



### MORE NUTRITION

Nuts are packed with many other nutrients. Some types of nuts have antioxidants such as vitamin E, vitamin C and selenium. Antioxidants help protect the cells in your body from wear and tear. Nuts are a good source of protein, which is important for your muscles. They are also a good source of fiber, zinc, copper, magnesium and some of the B vitamins.

### *Healthy Additions*

#### For breakfast:

- Top your cereal, oatmeal or yogurt with a sprinkling of nuts.
- Add nuts to your favorite muffin or pancake recipe.

#### For lunch and snacks:

- A handful of nuts eaten plain, roasted or toasted can be a quick snack or a tasty addition to a sack lunch.
- If you are on the road and feeling the need for a snack, watch for small packages of nuts in vending machines, convenience stores and airport gift shops.
- Be a kid again! Peanut butter or another nut spread such as almond butter with jelly on whole-grain bread can be a filling lunch or snack.

#### For dinner

- Instead of meat, add nuts to salads, pasta or stir-fries.
- Add ground nuts to bread crumb coatings for baked or fried chicken.

By Beth H. Olson, Ph.D., MSU Extension Nutrition Specialist, Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition, 3/09

# RECIPES

## Pasta Peanut Stir-Fry

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb. Linguine or spaghetti (uncooked)
- 1 tsp. Vegetable oil
- 4 ea. Carrots, medium, sliced in strips
- 1/2 tsp. Hot red pepper flakes
- 1 bunch Scallions or green onions, chopped
- 1 ea. Cucumber, large, peeled, cut in strips
- 3 Tbsp. Smooth peanut butter
- 1/3 cup Lime juice
- 1/2 cup Low-sodium soy sauce
- 1/2 cup Low-fat chicken broth
- Fresh ground black pepper to taste

### PREPARATION

Prepare pasta; drain and transfer to serving bowl. Warm 1 teaspoon vegetable oil in a large nonstick wok or skillet over high heat. Add the carrots and stir-fry for 2 to 3 minutes until tender. Add the red pepper flakes, cucumbers and scallions to the wok or skillet and stir-fry for 2 minutes. Add all the remaining ingredients to the wok or skillet, season with pepper. Bring to a boil. Pour the vegetables over the pasta. Toss well and serve immediately.

## Storage Tips

To keep nuts fresh, store in an air-tight container in the refrigerator for up to six months, or up to a year in the freezer.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

**The Peanut Institute**  
[www.peanut-institute.org](http://www.peanut-institute.org)

**The International Tree Nut Council**  
**Nutrition Research & Education Foundation**  
[www.nuthealth.org](http://www.nuthealth.org)

**Mayo Clinic - Nuts and your heart: Eating nuts for heart health**  
[www.mayoclinic.com/health/nuts/HB00085](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/nuts/HB00085)

## Easy Waldorf Salad

### INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup Low-fat or fat-free salad dressing or mayonnaise
- 2 Tbsp. Lemon juice
- 6 oz. Grilled chicken breast, diced
- 1 cup Diced celery
- 1 cup Chopped apple
- 1/2 cup Chopped dates
- 1/2 cup Walnut pieces

### PREPARATION

Mix salad dressing and lemon juice in a large bowl. Add chicken, celery, apples, dates and walnuts; mix lightly. Refrigerate several hours or until chilled.

