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Kindred *Spirits*

Eat Nuts for Good Heart Health

Nutritious Nuts

Nut Nutrition Facts

- Almonds-rich in vitamin E and calcium.
- Brazil nuts-best source of selenium.
- Cashews-rich in copper and zinc.
- Chestnuts-are lowest in calories and contain extremely small amounts of fat.
- Peanuts-rich in arginine and also contain the most protein.
- Walnuts-rich in alpha-linolenic acid, a heart healthy omega-3 fatty acid.
- Nut butters, such as almond, cashew and peanut, are a healthier sandwich filling than full-fat cheese and some deli meats.

Researchers have examined the effect of eating nuts on cardiovascular health. Studies have found that people who eat nuts regularly have lower risks of heart disease. Nuts, which contain unsaturated fatty acids and other nutrients, are a great snack food. However, they are high in calories. According to Saralee Jaimeson, MU Extension human development specialist, "It is very easy to overeat these tasty snacks. If you can restrain yourself from over-eating them, nuts can definitely be a part of a healthy diet." They're also inexpensive and easy to store.

Most nuts are generally healthy, though some more so than others. Walnuts are one of the best studied nuts, and it's been shown they contain high amounts of omega-3 fatty acids. Almonds, macadamia nuts, hazelnuts, and pecans are other nuts that appear to be quite heart healthy. Even peanuts, which are technically not a nut but a legume, are relatively healthy. Keep in mind that you could end up canceling out the heart-healthy benefits of nuts if they're covered with chocolate, sugar, or salt.

Almost every type of nut has a lot of nutrition packed into a tiny package. Nuts are one of the best plant sources of protein. They are rich in fiber, phytonutrients and antioxidants such as Vitamin E and selenium. Nuts are also high in plant sterols and fat—but mostly monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats which have all been shown to lower

LDL or "bad" cholesterol. Some research has shown that nuts may increase HDL, or "good," cholesterol.

Nuts contain as much as 80 percent fat. Even though most of this fat is healthy fat, it's still a lot of calories. That's why you should eat nuts in moderation. Ideally, you should use nuts as a substitute for saturated fat. Instead of eating unhealthy saturated fats, try substituting a handful of nuts.

Current dietary guidelines suggest eating 1 to 2 ounces (a small handful) of nuts each day. But what's in a handful? Here's how many of the following nuts it takes to make one ounce: 24 almonds, 6-8 Brazil nuts, 18 cashews, 20 hazelnuts, 10-12 macadamias, 28 peanuts, 18 pecan halves, 157 pine nuts, 49 pistachios, and 14 walnut halves. But again, do this as part of a heart-healthy diet. Just eating nuts and not cutting back on saturated fats found in many dairy and meat products won't do your heart any good.

Good ways to use nuts:

- Add silvered almonds or pine nuts to salads instead of croutons or real or processed bacon bits.
- Make your own trail mix with high-fiber cereal, dried fruit and nuts.
- Use natural nut butter as a spread instead of cream cheese. Just make sure it's natural—most processed nut butters contain trans fats and sugar.

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Weave a family tapestry

Storytelling can bridge the generations

Storytelling is a silver thread that weaves generations into a tightly woven tapestry. When you tell a childhood story or share a life encounter, these threads connect you with your grandchildren in a way that can't be broken. According to Kris Jenkins, MU Extension human development specialist, "These stories create the fabric of a family's past and of its future."

You hold a wealth of experience that not only can interest the younger generation, but also teach values, provide solutions for problems and establish clues to their identity. You don't have to be talented to be a good

storyteller. The word "storyteller" may bring to mind a speaker who is dramatic and holds listeners spell-bound. Children are fascinated to hear about your past and experiences. Jenkins suggests these ideas for family storytelling:

- **Have fun and don't act your age.** Add in humor and relay your stories with a sense of fun or amusement. Children like to hear about the mistakes and mishaps. It helps them realize that it's normal to have tough or embarrassing times.
- **Share a story to make a point.** But don't lecture! Children are more open to morality lessons if they don't feel like the story is directed at them.
- **Be animated with your voice and your face.** Facial expressions and

changes in tone are an essential part of storytelling. They grab and keep children's attention.

- **Address tough topics.** Use tough situations from your past to show children about life's fears or challenges. Stories about making choices and the consequences give real-life examples to ponder.
- **Tailor the story to the child's attention span.** Less is more if the child is young. Older youth can handle a more detailed story.
- **Listen as well as talk.** While telling your story, children will often ask questions, share their stories or tell little jokes. Storytelling should be an exchange with your grandchild.

Sources: Amy Goyer, director of the AARP Foundation's Grandparenting Program; AARP Bulletin, August 2008.

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MYActivity Pyramid Guidelines

MyActivity Pyramid is a guide that shows children, ages 6 to 11, what types of daily activities they should do to stay fit. According to Lynda Johnson, MU Extension nutrition and health education specialist, "Less screen time and more active play is the message. The goal for children is 60 minutes of accumulated physical activity each day."

The bottom of the pyramid sets the stage with examples of everyday activities such shooting hoops, walking the dog or helping with chores.

The next level describes vigorous activities needed three to five times a week, like baseball, soccer, jogging, jumping rope or rollerblading.

The very top includes watching TV or playing video and computer games, activities that should be limited. Visit <http://extension.missouri.edu/publications/> to download your copy of MyActivity Pyramid.