

Why Add Nuts to Your Eating Plan?

Years ago, nuts were thought to be too high in fat for a heart-healthy diet. But no more! The NLA recommends eating 4 or more servings of unsalted nuts each week. Studies show that eating unsalted nuts lowers your risk of heart disease, stroke, and diabetes. Nuts lower LDL, or ‘bad,’ cholesterol levels and raise ‘good’ HDL cholesterol levels. Nuts also help lower other heart disease risk factors like inflammation and blood pressure. Some nuts (walnuts) and seeds (chia and flax seeds, pumpkin seeds) contain the omega-3 fat called alpha-linolenic acid (ALA). Eating foods high in ALA may help improve your heart health. Be mindful that a 1-ounce serving of nuts and most seeds has 160 to 210 calories. Eating small portions of nuts can reduce food cravings and is unlikely to cause weight gain. Choose raw or unsalted nuts and seeds in place of other foods as a snack. Nuts and seeds with a higher amount of unsaturated fat and a lower amount of saturated fat are the best choices.



Nutrition Facts about Nuts and Seeds

Nuts and Seeds (1 oz. or 1 Tbsp. as noted)	Total Calories	Protein (grams)	Total Fat (grams)	SFA* (grams)	MUFA* (grams)	PUFA* (grams)	Fiber (grams)
Almonds (22 pieces)	169	6.0	15.0	1.1	9.5	3.6	3.3
Cashews (18 pieces)	162	5.2	13.1	2.6	7.7	2.2	0.8
Hazelnuts (12 pieces)	182	4.2	17.6	1.3	13.2	2.4	2.7
Macadamia (11 pieces)	202	2.2	21.5	3.4	16.7	0.4	2.3
Peanuts (35 pieces)	165	7.0	14.0	1.9	7.0	4.4	2.3
Pecans (20 halves)	210	2.6	21.0	1.8	12.4	5.8	2.7
Pine nuts (1/4 cup)	190	3.6	19.3	1.4	5.3	9.6	1.0
Pistachios (49 pieces)	161	5.8	13.0	1.6	6.8	3.9	2.9
Pumpkin seeds (85 seeds)	158	8.6	13.9	2.5	4.6	5.9	1.7
Walnuts (14 halves)	185	4.3	18.4	1.7	2.5	13.3	1.9
Chia seeds (1 oz.)	138	4.7	8.7	0.9	0.7	6.7	9.8
Flaxseed, ground (1 Tbsp.)	37	1.3	3.0	0.3	0.5	2.0	1.9

Tips for Adding Unsalted Nuts and Seeds to Your Eating Plan

- Sprinkle slivered or chopped almonds, pecans, or walnuts on salads, oatmeal and whole-grain cereal
- Add sliced almonds, pecans, or hazelnuts to non-fat plain yogurt and mix with berries or bananas
- Blend 1 Tbsp. of ground flaxseed into oatmeal or non-fat or low-fat yogurt
- Mix crushed pistachios or macadamias with breadcrumbs for a crispy, baked fish topping
- Add gently roasted pine nuts to pesto and pasta sauce
- Mix cashews or peanuts with a vegetable stir-fry
- Add sliced almonds, pine nuts, or pistachios to sautéed vegetables, such as green beans
- Spread unsalted nut butter on celery sticks, sliced apples, or whole-grain breads or crackers
- Make homemade trail-mix with mixed nuts, whole grain dry cereal, and dried fruit
- Snack on 1 oz. of unsalted walnuts or pumpkin seeds.



A registered dietitian nutritionist can help you make a heart-healthy meal plan that works best for your lifestyle, and support you in your journey to a healthful dietary pattern.