

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

NUTRITION & HEALTH FOR BABY BOOMERS & BEYOND

Vol. 2 Issue 3

Food, fitness and health are essential ingredients for preventing disease and living a long, active life. Research is finding that a health-promoting diet can be tasty and fulfilling—foods like creamy peanut butter melting over a warm piece of whole wheat toast can be healthy for your heart! Scientific studies show that diets with monounsaturated fats, like the fat found in olive oil and peanut products, can:

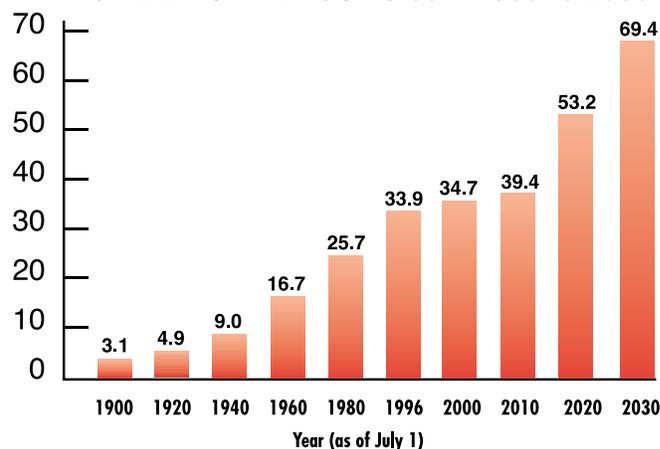
-  Lower total cholesterol and lower LDL (bad) cholesterol
-  Raise HDL (good) cholesterol
-  Help in weight loss and weight maintenance
-  Fight diseases associated with aging

Population Shifts Towards 50+

The number of older adults around the world is increasing at a very rapid rate. In 1960, less than one in ten people in the United States was age 65 or older. By the year 2030, it is estimated that one in four Americans will be 65 years or older (1). The statistics are similar in other countries as well. By 2025, over 20% of the populations in the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Switzerland, Japan and Sweden will be over 65 years old (2). And with this increase in age, comes an increase in the incidence of many chronic diseases, including diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, obesity, and coronary heart disease. Diet can play an intricate role in keeping the fastest growing part of our population healthy and disease free.

Lifestyle, and specifically dietary habits, can help to combat the effects of aging on health. By making the right food choices, you can keep your body strong and energetic. You may even be able to prevent some of the diseases that are normally associated with aging.

NUMBER OF PERSONS 65+: 1900 to 2030



Source: AARP/AOA "Profile of Older Americans" 1997.

	PAGE
 Nutrient Needs for Staying Healthy	2
 Scientists Take Another Look at Peanuts and Peanut Products in the Diet	3
 References	4

Nutrient Needs for Staying Healthy

As you age, there are certain nutrients that can help you stay healthy. They include protein, monounsaturated (good) fat, fiber, phytochemicals, B vitamins (such as folate), antioxidants (vitamins A, E and C), and calcium to maintain bone strength. Here are a few nutrients that may be especially important:

Protein

Older people need protein in their diets for a number of different reasons. Protein-rich foods help to maintain lean body mass, which decreases with age. In addition, protein is critical to the body's immune system, which helps you fight off colds and infections. Peanuts contain a significant amount of **plant** protein, so they do not contain the cholesterol nor do they contain much of the saturated fat that is found in many animal sources of protein. One ounce, or about 15 whole peanuts, offers 7 g of protein.

Vitamin E and Antioxidants

A recent study published in the New England Journal of Medicine reported that there is a positive link between vitamin E from food sources, and preventing coronary heart disease (2). Since the risk of coronary heart disease increases with age, it is important that older people consume adequate amounts of vitamin E, preferably through food sources (2,3). A one ounce serving of peanuts provides an adult with 25% of the Recommended Dietary Allowance, or RDA for vitamin E.

Antioxidants protect cells in your body against damage. Vitamins A, C, and E act as antioxidants, which can prevent cells from becoming cancerous. A wide range of disease conditions are associated with either an excess generation of free radicals or an inadequate antioxidant defense system (4). Laboratory (5) and epidemiological (6,7) studies indicate that antioxidants, and specifically vitamin E, may play a role in preventing the development of coronary heart disease. Vitamin E antioxidants are found in peanuts, peanut butter and other peanut products, as well as other nuts, seeds, vegetable oils, and whole grains.

Fiber

Fiber is important for older Americans, as it helps them to stay regular. Peanuts contain a significant amount of fiber, and can help eliminate the problem of constipation. Diets high in fiber have been shown to decrease and prevent the incidence of a number of illnesses including coronary heart disease, colon cancer and diabetes (8). Besides peanuts, other good sources of fiber include whole-grain breads and cereals, fruits, beans, and vegetables.

Phytochemicals

The health benefits of phytochemicals (plant chemicals) are still being discovered, but scientists believe that phytochemicals can protect against cancer, heart disease, and other illnesses associated with increasing age. Phytochemicals are thought to aid in the uptake of cholesterol circulating in the blood, leading to overall lower blood cholesterol levels. One phytochemical in particular, **resveratrol**, has been shown to act as an antioxidant and has also exhibited anti-cancer properties (9). Resveratrol is found in peanuts, grapes, and red wine.

Top Health Concerns for People 50+

1. Heart Disease
2. Cancer
3. Diabetes Mellitus

Top 3 Diet and Nutrition Challenges

1. Energy Balance (weight control)
2. Eating an Optimal Diet for Disease Prevention (protein, good monounsaturated fat, fiber, Zphytochemicals, B vitamins, antioxidants)
3. Finding Foods with the Most Nutrients per Calorie (caloric needs decline with age, while some nutrient needs increase)

Scientists Take Another Look at Peanuts and Peanut Products in the Diet

Penn State University- Dr. Penny Kris-Etherton found that diets high in peanuts, peanut butter and peanut oil are as effective as olive oil in protecting against heart disease and are even more heart healthy than very low fat diets. Diets with peanuts/peanut butter/peanut oil, as the main source of fat, lowered total cholesterol (14%) and LDL-cholesterol (11%) in just 4 weeks. A peanut/peanut butter diet was shown to be better than a low-fat diet because it lowers triglyceride levels, while leaving HDL (good) cholesterol high, which the low-fat diet did not do.

Perdue University- Recently Dr. Rick Mattes, who is studying the effects of eating peanuts on hunger and food intake, has found that after participants ate peanuts and peanut butter, they felt more satisfied over a 3 hour period than after eating other high carbohydrate snack foods, such as rice cakes. Additionally, since they were more satisfied, they did not increase their daily calorie intake, which leads to weight gain.

Harvard School of Public Health- Preliminary results of an ongoing study of weight loss patients showed that subjects who eat a “Mediterranean-style” diet (35% of calories from fat, mainly monounsaturated fat like that found in peanuts,

olive oil and avocados) and subjects who eat a typically low-fat diet (20% of calories from fat), are both successful in losing weight. However, more people seemed to be able to stick to the higher fat, “Mediterranean-style” diet over a period of time.

Another study, published recently in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, showed that eating low glycemic index foods such as peanuts and peanut butter, yogurt, beans, and broccoli, along with a diet high in cereal fiber, can significantly reduce the risk of non-insulin-dependent diabetes in women.

The long-term Nurses Health Study, which examined over 87,000 nurses, found that eating peanuts and peanut butter four or more times a week had heart-healthy effects. Dr. Frank Hu, a researcher involved with the study, supports the consumption of peanuts as a good source of Vitamin E and other important nutrients. At the Experimental Biology '98 meeting he stated, “Our data suggest that frequent nut consumption is associated with significant reduction in cardiovascular disease rate. A protective effect of peanut and nut consumption is possible because of the unique nutrient content.” In the study, peanuts appeared to have the strongest heart-healthy effects.

Wake up and smell the...peanut butter!

Nutritionally speaking, peanut butter is the smart choice for your morning bagel:

	BAGEL WITH PEANUT BUTTER	BAGEL WITH CREAM CHEESE
Calories (kcal)	290	302
Protein (g)	12	6.4
Total Fat (g)	9	12.2
Saturated Fat (g)	1	7
Cholesterol (g)	0	36



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The Peanut Institute is a non-profit organization dedicated to expanding state-of-the-art knowledge regarding peanuts and peanut products. A special emphasis is placed on establishing sound science as the basis for food, nutrition, and health discussions about peanuts.

The Peanut Institute pursues its mission through research programs, educational initiatives, and the promotion of healthful lifestyles to consumers of all ages. As an independent forum, The Peanut Institute is uniquely positioned to work with all segments of the food industry, the research community, academia, consumer organizations and government.



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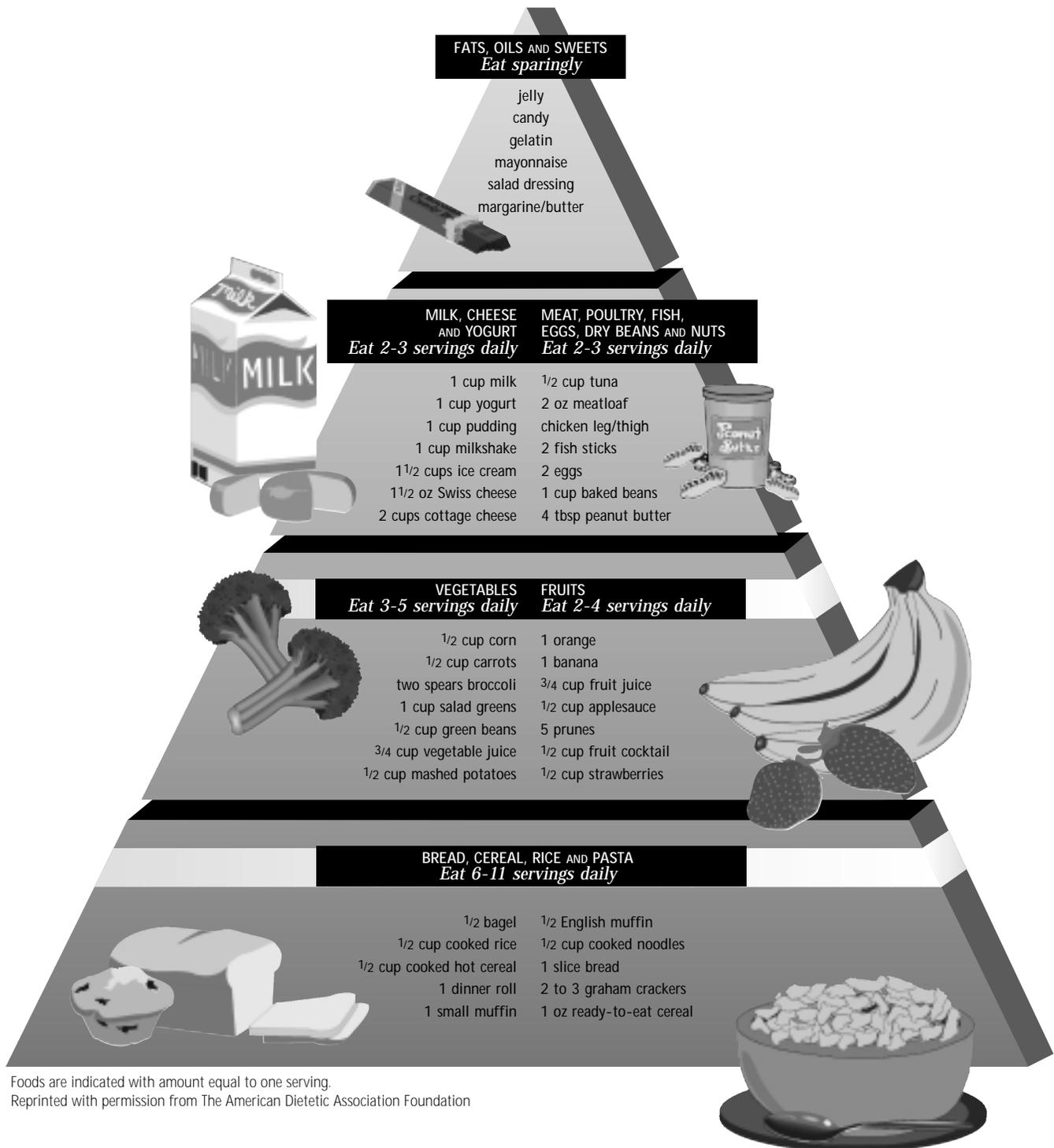
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Food Guide Pyramid for Persons 50 Plus

Here's an example of how to put together easy meals for a whole day of good nutrition:

Lunch:
1 cup lentil or split-pea soup
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup cole slaw



Small Changes, Big Rewards

The Food Guide Pyramid for Persons 50+, developed by the American Dietetic Association, is a useful tool for choosing a healthful eating plan. Because caloric needs decrease with age, it is important to choose a variety of foods that are packed with vitamins and minerals. At the same time, try choosing foods that are also lower in saturated fat and sodium. Making small changes in your diet can trigger big benefits to your health!

Peanut products are an excellent source of plant protein, good fat, fiber, and many other hard to get nutrients such as folate, niacin, vitamin E, magnesium, copper, and phosphorus. Try these snack ideas:

- Spread peanut butter on toast, bagels or waffles in the morning instead of margarine or butter.
- Dip veggies or fruit in peanut butter for a satisfying afternoon snack.
- Toss peanuts into salads, rice, or pasta dishes to give an appetizing crunch, as well as a nutritional boost!
- Mix peanuts with raisins, cereal, and pretzels for a tasty trail mix.
- Try a “savory” sauce on pasta or chicken using peanut butter as a base.

TOP TEN REASONS WHY OLDER ADULTS CAN ENJOY PEANUTS, PEANUT BUTTER AND PEANUT PRODUCTS EVERYDAY:

Good Fat

- 1) Peanuts and peanut butter are high in good, or unsaturated fat (like the fat in olive oil).
- 2) They are low in bad, or saturated fat.
- 3) A study at Pennsylvania University showed that diets with peanuts and peanut butter as the main source of fat lowered total cholesterol (14%) and LDL-cholesterol (11%) in just 4 weeks.
- 4) It also found that a diet including peanuts and peanut butter can have an advantage over a very low-fat diet because it lowers triglyceride levels, while leaving HDL (good) cholesterol alone, which a low-fat diet does not do.

Heart-healthy

- 5) A one ounce serving of peanuts provides 25% of the RDA for vitamin E. A study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* showed that consuming food sources of vitamin E can reduce the risk of heart disease.
- 6) One ounce of peanuts contains 10% of the RDA for the B vitamin folic acid, which removes

homocysteine from the blood. A study in *Journal of the American Medical Association* found that high levels of homocysteine in the blood is a risk factor for heart disease.

Fiber

- 7) They are easy to digest, and they aid in excretion—one small ounce has 2 big grams of fiber!

Protein

- 8) Peanuts have more protein per ounce than any other legume or nut -15% of the RDA in one ounce!

Other nutrients

- 9) Peanuts and peanut butter give you more bang for your buck—they have many more nutrients per calorie than other snack foods.
- 10) Peanut products contain many hard to get minerals—a 1 oz. serving provides 12% of the RDA for magnesium, 14% for copper, 12% for phosphorus, 5% for potassium, and 6% for zinc.