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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

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Peanuts & Peanut Butter — For Eating Satisfaction & Weight Loss

Have you ever been so hungry you would eat anything put in front of you? Or have you ever had a refrigerator full of food, but nothing quite satisfied you? If so, you probably recognize that these scenarios describe the difference between hunger, a true physiological need for food to survive, and appetite, the desire for specific foods to satisfy a more psychological need, such that just any food won't do.

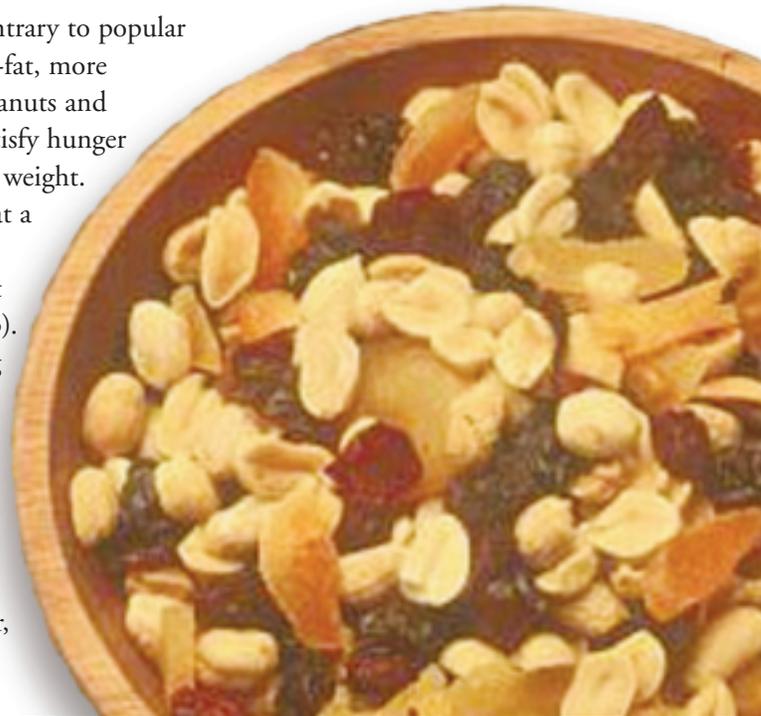
Making the distinction between hunger and appetite can lead to successful weight loss or maintenance because it can help you choose foods that satisfy your hunger and appetite at the same time. Generally, foods containing a balance of fat, protein, and fiber, such as peanuts, are thought to contribute to satiety, or feelings of fullness (1).

In addition, foods with fat usually taste the best, so there are no feelings of deprivation if they are incorporated into a diet.

The good news is that contrary to popular belief, eating some higher-fat, more palatable foods such as peanuts and peanut butter can help satisfy hunger and thereby help you lose weight.

In fact, research shows that a moderate-fat diet may be more beneficial for weight loss than a low-fat diet (2, 3). However, when increasing dietary fat, it is important to distinguish between types of fat. Scientific studies support choosing more of the “good” unsaturated fat found in peanuts and peanut butter,

and less of the “bad” saturated and trans fats found in some meats, high-fat dairy products, and many processed foods (4).



Peanut Eaters Have Lower Body Weights For years, people have shied away from eating foods high in fat such as peanuts, fearing they were fattening. However, a recent review study revealed that frequent nut-eaters do not have higher body weights compared to people who don't often eat nuts (5). Research shows that peanuts and peanut butter provide satiety (1)—curbing hunger and satisfying appetite—which may lead to lower body weights in people who consume nuts.

Peanuts Provide Satiety, Promote Weight Loss

 Peanuts and peanut butter provide a balance of “good” unsaturated fat, protein, and fiber. Specifically, it is thought that protein and fiber contribute to satiety, which helps with weight loss (1). A study conducted at Purdue University found that peanuts and peanut butter produced more eating satisfaction and feelings of fullness than other high-carbohydrate snacks, such as rice cakes. Peanuts kept participants satisfied for 2 1/2 hours versus a half hour for the rice cakes. Researchers were somewhat surprised to note that subjects who were fed the peanut snacks compensated for the additional calories provided by the peanuts and peanut butter so that they did not add extra calories to their daily diet (1).

Building on this observation, the first clinical study to specifically explain why peanut-eaters have lower body weights

than non-peanut-eaters was designed. It showed that when people ate peanuts, they naturally decreased what they ate at other times of the day. Participants in the study spontaneously remarked that they felt full when they included peanuts and peanut butter in their daily diets (6).

The fifteen participants in this study were provided with a test portion of 500 calories of peanuts a day, or about three ounces. Each participant took part in all three of the following study phases:

- a “free-feeding” phase in which participants were given peanuts without dietary guidance (8 weeks);
- an “addition” phase in which participants were asked to add peanuts to their usual diet (3 weeks); and
- a “substitution” phase during which 500 calories of peanuts replaced an equal amount of calories from other fats in the diet (8 weeks).

Peanuts for Overall Health Benefits

 “Some foods once deemed to be unhealthy simply because of their fat content (e.g., peanuts) have become important parts of diets designed to lower blood pressure and [blood] cholesterol, to control weight and to achieve secondary prevention of coronary artery disease, besides adding flavor, variety and texture to dishes (7).”

-American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, 2003

As expected, participants did not gain weight during the substitution period, as their calorie intake remained similar to their usual intake. In the free-feeding and addition phases, the researchers expected the participants to gain weight, given the additional calories consumed (500 extra calories per day from peanuts). However, the participants gained substantially less weight than was expected. The participants appeared to compensate for the extra calories by eating fewer calories from other food sources (6).

Thus, when peanuts and peanut butter are consumed, it appears a “spontaneous substitution effect” may occur. That is, people may reduce caloric intake from other food sources throughout the day. Because small portions of peanuts provide eating satisfaction, they help dieters balance caloric intake.

New Research Says Don't Go Too “Low Fat” on a Weight-Loss Diet

 New research shows that a higher unsaturated-fat, lower-carb, peanut and peanut butter diet for weight loss reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease by 14% compared to baseline (3). This ground-breaking study proves that the way you lose weight is important for long-term health. According to the principal investigator and distinguished professor of nutrition at The Pennsylvania State University, Penny Kris-Etherton, PhD, RD, “The peanut-rich, higher unsaturated-fat diet resulted in favorable heart-health benefits. The low-fat group, in contrast, lowered the ‘good’ high-density lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol and showed a rebound in triglycerides during weight maintenance.”

In fact, this is the first study to show that, even with weight-loss, a low-fat diet did not favorably affect triglyceride levels. Those on the higher unsaturated-fat peanut and peanut butter diet lost the same amount of weight as those on the low-fat diet (2.5 pounds per week), but also had the added cardiovascular benefit of maintaining “good” HDL cholesterol and lowering triglyceride levels. Thus, a balanced diet with peanuts and peanut butter can help with weight loss while improving heart health—and eating satisfaction!

Peanut Butter and Peanuts Help You Stick to a Weight-Loss Plan

One of the major problems people have with sticking to a weight-loss plan is that they feel deprived or get tired of eating “diet food.” Researchers usually predict some decline in the pleasantness, or hedonics, of foods eaten daily for a long period of time. Even though some weight-loss plans can result in monotony, in the clinical trial just described, participants reported that continual consumption of peanuts over the course of the study did not make them “tired” of eating them. In fact, the ability to eat enjoyable foods such as peanuts and peanut butter may help people stick to a weight-loss plan for life (8).

Adding evidence to this point, researchers at Harvard School of Public Health and Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston found that people following a Mediterranean-style, moderate-fat, weight-loss diet were able to keep weight off for a longer period of time than people following the traditionally recommended low-fat diet. In part, the palatability of the Mediterranean-style diet may have helped contribute to weight loss and weight maintenance (8).

In this study of 101 overweight men and women, half were instructed to eat a low-fat diet (20% calories from fat) and half to eat a moderate-fat diet (35% calories from fat, mostly monounsaturated from peanut butter, nuts, and healthy oils). All participants were given guidelines to eat a diet of approximately 1,200 to 1,500 calories that was low in saturated fat and cholesterol (8).

Three times as many people stuck to the weight-loss diet when they could choose satisfying foods like peanut butter and peanuts.

Only 20% of study participants could stick to the low-fat diet while more than half stuck to the moderate-fat diet. Both groups had lost an average of 11 pounds at the one-year mark. However, as illustrated in Chart A, the moderate-fat group kept a significant amount of weight off for 18 months. On the other hand, the low-fat group did not keep the weight off and even began to regain the weight they had lost. After two years, most of the low-fat group regained all of their weight and more (8).

The moderate-fat diet included foods that are typically not allowed on most weight-loss diets such as peanuts, peanut butter, avocados, and healthy oil. As a result, the diet was more palatable than other weight-loss diets and this may have helped people follow the dietary pattern for the long-term (8).

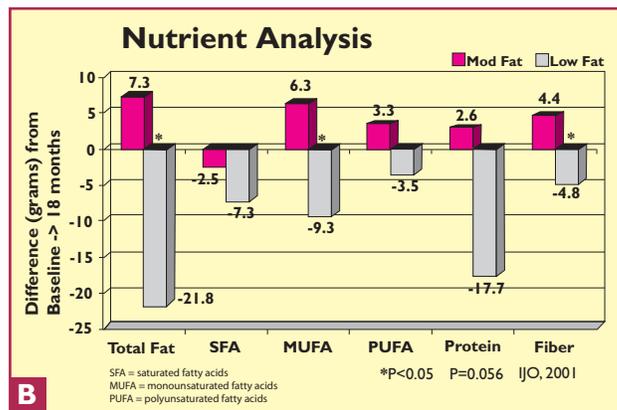
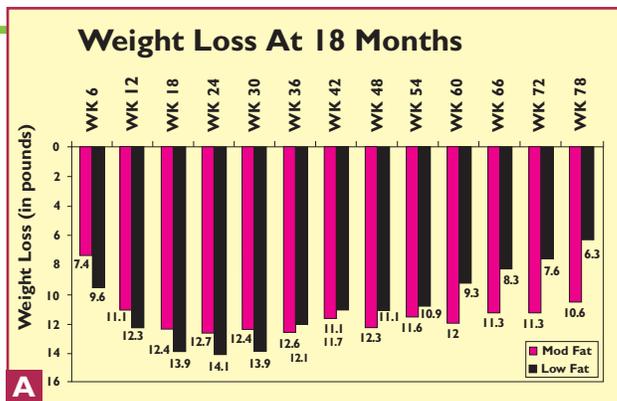
An added benefit of this approach is that in the process of eating a moderate-fat, weight-loss diet, participants increased the overall healthfulness of their diet. The nutrient analysis illustrated in Chart B shows that although the moderate-fat group was consuming more total fat, the majority of it was “good” mono- and polyunsaturated fat. In addition, the moderate-fat group

consumed more protein than the low-fat group.

The moderate-fat group also increased their fiber intake while the low-fat group decreased their fiber intake. This is important because most people do not meet daily fiber recommendations. Peanuts and peanut butter added fiber to the participants’ diets, plus many participants used olive oil or peanut oil on salads or to add flavor to high-fiber vegetables.

Satiety and Weight-Loss for Life

Overall, foods such as peanuts and peanut butter contain a balance of unsaturated fat, protein, and fiber to provide satiety. Finding a diet that satisfies can promote both initial and, more importantly, sustained weight loss. Moreover, allowing yourself to eat enjoyable foods while you are watching your weight can help you lose and maintain weight successfully for life!



Sample Meals: Higher Unsaturated-fat, Lower-carb Diet

Try these meals modified from the Harvard weight-loss study to help curb your hunger and lose weight (9).



Breakfast

2 multi-grain waffles
3/4 cup red raspberries
1 tablespoon peanut butter
2 teaspoons maple syrup
1/2 cup nonfat milk

Lunch

2 ounces lean ham
1/2 ounce low-fat Swiss cheese
2 teaspoons mustard
2 leaves lettuce
2 slices fresh tomato, 1/4-inch thick
2 slices 100% whole-wheat bread
1 fresh kiwi fruit, medium

Dinner

3 ounces broiled haddock
1/2 cup wild rice, cooked
1 cup green beans
1 cup spinach salad
2 teaspoons olive oil
2 teaspoons vinegar

Snack

1 ounce peanuts

Breakfast

3/4 cup oatmeal
1/2 cup nonfat milk
1 apple, medium
1 tablespoon peanut butter

2 slices rye bread
2 teaspoons fat-free mayonnaise
2 slices fresh tomato,
1/4-inch thick
2 leaves lettuce
1 fresh orange, medium

Dinner

3 ounces pork tenderloin,
broiled
1 small sweet potato
1/2 cup beets, canned, sliced
1 cup zucchini, steamed
1 cup tossed green salad
2 teaspoons olive oil
2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar

Lunch

2 ounces tuna
1/4 cup celery, chopped

Snack

1 ounce peanuts

Two-Day Averages: 1200 calories; 34% calories from total fat (7% calories from saturated fat); 43% calories from carbohydrates; 23% calories from protein, 25 grams of fiber

Go to www.peanut-institute.org for:

The Peanut Institute is a non-profit organization that supports nutrition research and develops educational programs to encourage healthy lifestyles.

For Further Information:

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- Peanut and peanut butter nutrition research
- Recipes
- Meal plans
- Educational materials



References

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8. McManus, K., et al. A randomized controlled trial of a moderate-fat, low-energy diet compared with a low-fat, low-energy diet for weight loss in overweight adults. *International Journal of Obesity*. 2001;25:1503-1511.
9. Calorie Controlled Moderate Fat Eating Plans for Brigham and Women's Hospital/Harvard Weight-Loss Study, 2001. Pennington Biomedical Research Center. Designed by Kathy McManus, MS, RD. Brigham and Women's Hospital, Boston, MA. Revised January 2004 with Food Processor SQL Software, ESHA Research. Approved by Kathy McManus.

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Continued from front
were able to keep weight off for a longer
period of time than people on a traditional
low-fat diet (20% calories from fat).

Both groups lost an average of 11 pounds
at the one-year mark. However, more
than 50% of the moderate-fat group
stuck with the diet, while only 20% of
the low-fat group stuck with the diet.
Further, the moderate-fat group kept a
significant amount of weight off for 18
months, whereas those who continued
in the low-fat group did not. In fact,
after two years most people in the
low-fat group regained all of their weight
and more. Eating satisfying foods with
healthful fat like peanut butter and
peanuts may help you lose and maintain
weight for life.

Peanuts provide satiety, or eating
satisfaction, which appears to promote
weight loss (5). Research has shown that
protein and fiber appear to increase sati-
ety. Peanuts contain 6 grams of protein
and 2 grams of fiber per ounce. A clinical

study showed that when people ate
about three ounces of peanuts daily they
spontaneously compensated for the extra
calories by eating fewer calories from
other foods, even when they were told
not to (6). Therefore, peanuts appear
to curb appetite and may limit caloric
intake to promote weight loss as a result.

n Diet and Exercise: A Balancing Act
Eating 3,500 calories more than your
body needs causes one pound of weight
gain. Therefore, reducing your normal
caloric intake by 500 calories a day will
result in one pound of weight loss per
week. However, expending calories
through exercise is essential for maximal
weight loss. Experts recommend getting
one hour of physical activity per day most
days of the week (7). But every little
bit helps burn calories to lose weight, so
try to increase activity whenever you can.
For example, take the stairs, walk to near-
by stores, and park far from your destina-
tion so you can walk more.

Quick Facts

about Peanuts & Peanut Butter

Peanuts and peanut butter fit well
into a high-protein, low-carbohy-
drate diet. They provide 2 grams of
fiber and just 4 grams of net carbs^Ó
(total carbohydrates minus fiber).

Regular peanut butter contains the
same amount of calories as reduced-fat
peanut butter and provides more
of the good, heart-healthy
unsaturated fat.

Nutrition Facts Label for Peanut Butter

References:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Health Statistics. Overweight Prevalence

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For Further Information:

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