THE POWER OF PEANUT PROTEIN

Peanuts and peanut butter are a nutrient dense food and an American favorite. They account for over two-thirds of all nuts eaten in the U.S. and are packed full of powerful nutrients and healthy oils shown to reduce the risk of many chronic diseases. Peanuts and peanut butter are very high in protein and contain more protein than any other nut, with levels comparable to a serving of beans. A one-ounce serving of peanuts contains about 8g of protein. Protein functions as a building block for muscle, bones, tissue, skin, blood, hormones, and even vitamins. It is essential for building and repairing muscles, maintaining bodily function, and has also shown to play a role in weight maintenance and satiety.

PEANUTS CONTAIN MORE PROTEIN THAN ANY OTHER NUT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Based on 1-ounce portion</th>
<th>Peanuts</th>
<th>Pistachio</th>
<th>Almond</th>
<th>Cashew</th>
<th>Walnut</th>
<th>Brazil</th>
<th>Hazelnut</th>
<th>Macadamia</th>
<th>Pecan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protein (g)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

USDA National Nutrient Database, Release 25, 2011

PEANUT PROTEIN IS EASY TO DIGEST

Research shows that peanut protein has a high digestibility comparable to soy protein and higher than chickpea and wheat. Also, although peanuts do not contain all 9 of the essential amino acids in perfect proportions to make it a complete protein, pairing peanuts or peanut butter with any whole grain or consuming whole grains throughout the day will provide the balance your body needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Digestibility %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peanuts</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanut Flour</td>
<td>91-98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Protein</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soy Protein isolate</td>
<td>93-97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chickpeas</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornmeal</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheat Pasta</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Janet King, 2013 and Singh, 1991

Did you know

A peanut butter sandwich with a 8oz glass of milk provides about 22g of protein, which is almost half of the daily value for the average person.

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PEOPLE CAN EAT MORE PROTEIN

The acceptable macronutrient distribution range for adults is approximately 10-35%. This means about 10-35% of our energy intake should come from protein (about 46-56 g/day). Americans are only consuming less than half of this range (15%) of recommended protein intake.

PEANUT PROTEIN KEEPS GOOD COMPANY

Unlike animal protein that can be high in cholesterol and saturated fat, peanut protein is a cholesterol-free, plant-based protein that carries with it additional components that have positive health benefits like fiber and unique bioactives.

Peanuts contain about 2.5g of fiber per ounce\(^3\), making them a good source according to the FDA. Fiber absorbs water in the body to expand and make us feel fuller, and studies show that peanuts and peanut butter promote satiety and weight management due to their high content of protein and fiber.\(^7\)

Peanuts contain more Arginine, an amino acid that helps to open up blood vessels and improve circulation, than any other whole food.\(^3\) Research has shown that Arginine may help to decrease blood pressure, improve wound healing, promote increased muscle mass and decrease body fat.\(^8\)

Peanuts are the most nutrient dense nut. They contain over 30 essential nutrients and are a good or excellent source of 8 vitamins and minerals including vitamin E, folate, niacin, and magnesium.\(^3\)

PEANUT FLOUR

Peanut flour is made from defatted peanuts. It contains about 10 to 15g of protein per ounce and is packed with essential nutrients and bioactives. One small scoop (2 Tbsp) is a good source of folate, zinc, and potassium and an excellent source of fiber, magnesium, phosphorus, and niacin.\(^3\)

Because peanut flour is highly concentrated, it has a strong and pleasant nutty flavor that is used in many popular sports bars and products to provide taste, protein, and nutrition. Try adding peanut flour to a shake or smoothie for a flavorful and nutrient-rich protein boost. This versatile ingredient is also gluten-free and vegan!

PB&J PROTEIN SHAKE

1 oz. Peanut flour
1 cup skim milk
½ cup water
½ ripe banana
½ cup frozen berries
½ Tbs honey

Add ingredients with ice and blend until smooth.

Provides: 275 calories, 1g fat, 27g protein, 54g carbohydrate, 8g fiber.
**FILL YOUR PLATE WITH PLANT PROTEIN**

Although peanuts are actually legumes, they are classified as nuts because of the way they are eaten, and are included in the US dietary guidelines and related dietary guidance in the “protein group,” which should make up 15-35% of your daily caloric intake.

“The protein group is the ‘carbohydrate group’ of the US Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010. This group provides protein and other nutrients that are essential for healthy body function, help fill your plate, and help you feel full longer.”

“Some protein products, particularly some animal-based sources, are high in saturated fat, so non-fat, low-fat, or lean choices should be selected. Fat intake should emphasize monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, such as those found in seafood, nuts, seeds, and oils.”

- Dietary Guidelines 2010

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**PEANUT PROTEIN IS HEART HEALTHY**

Consuming plant-proteins like peanuts, peanut flour, and peanut butter can have heart health benefits. One study on hamsters showed that non-lipid components in peanuts, such as protein, Arginine, and micronutrients, may help reduce cholesterol and benefit heart health. Another study showed that replacing red meat in the diet with a plant-protein like peanuts can decrease the risk of heart disease by 19%.

In the Optimal Macronutrient Intake Trial for Heart Health (OMNI Heart), three diets were compared to determine the effects on blood pressure as well as the optimal diet pattern for reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease. The first diet was based on the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) diet, which emphasized carbohydrates. The second diet had higher fat levels from healthy unsaturated fats. The third diet had higher protein levels; over half of which were from plant sources, including peanuts and peanut butter.

The study showed that in addition to the benefits of substituting healthy fat for carbohydrate in the DASH diet, substituting healthy protein also further reduced blood pressure and the risk of heart disease.

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**Did you know?**

Peanuts are beneficial for weight loss. Three times as many people stuck with a “good” fat weight loss diet that included peanuts and peanut butter in a Mediterranean-style diet vs. a low-fat diet. Fat provides taste and protein and provides satiety so people don’t feel deprived.

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Peanuts, peanut flour, and peanut protein offer an affordable and natural alternative to the endless amount of sports supplements and protein powders flooding the market today. They are a good source of protein, fiber, and many essential nutrients. Most athletes require twice as much protein as the average person to keep their muscles strong and healthy and decrease the risk of injuries.\(^\text{14}\)

Peanuts contain more Arginine than any other food and peanut flour contains twice the amount. Arginine has been shown to play a role in building and repairing muscles, increasing strength and power, and faster recovery in active individuals.\(^\text{8,15}\)

Peanuts are also high in vitamin E, an antioxidant important for reducing oxidative stress. They are a good source of many B vitamins for energy metabolism, contain zinc for injuries and muscle repair, and provide iron important for delivering oxygen to muscles and tissues.

Try keeping peanut butter and crackers or trail mix in your gym bag for a convenient and tasty source of essential nutrients to power your sport or activity.

**REFERENCES**