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Contact: Patricia Kearney, Tel: 703-841-1600
pat@pmkassociates.com

Girls Who Regularly Eat Peanut Butter and Peanuts May Reduce Risk of Breast Cancer Later

Albany, GA, September 27, 2013. – A new study released in the journal *Breast Cancer Research and Treatment*, showed that young girls who consumed a serving of peanut butter or peanuts at least twice a week, reduced their risk of benign breast disease (BBD) in young adulthood by up to 39%. This gives parents even more of a reason to pack a peanut butter sandwich with their kid's lunch.

“These findings suggest that peanut butter could help reduce the risk of breast cancer in women,” said Graham Colditz, MD, DrPH, senior author and associate director for cancer prevention and control at Siteman Cancer Center at Barnes-Jewish Hospital and Washington University School of Medicine.

The study “Vegetable Protein And Vegetable Fat Intakes In Pre-Adolescent And Adolescent Girls, And Risk For Benign Breast Disease In Young Women” was conducted jointly by Washington University School of Medicine and Harvard Medical School. Data was analyzed from over 9,000 girls and young women who participated in the long-term research study, Growing Up Today. The article explains that, “Vegetable fat consumed by pre-adolescent girls and vegetable protein consumed by adolescents may be protective, while peanut butter, high in both protein and fat, consumed at any age may be associated with lower risk for BBD.” Peanuts contain more protein than any other nut and peanut butter contains about 8g of protein per serving. In addition, peanut butter contains healthy oils and many nutrients such as phytosterols that have been shown to reduce the risk of major diseases including cancer. Previous research has shown that benign breast disease (BBD) in young women is associated with increased risk of breast cancer and other adult diseases.

Girls in the study, aged 9 to 15, reported dietary habits in food frequency questionnaires, and then later between the ages of 18 to 30, participants reported whether they had been diagnosed with benign breast disease that was confirmed by biopsy.

Results showed that across all categories, decreased risk of BBD was most strongly driven by peanut butter or peanut intake as a vegetable protein or fat source. Among 9 to 15 year old girls, cumulative vegetable fat intake was inversely associated with risk of BBD, with peanut butter and peanuts being the most highly consumed vegetable fat among the participants. At younger ages, vegetable fat intake from peanut butter and peanuts twice a week, had a 44% decrease in risk for BBD. And in older ages, it was the vegetable protein intake from peanut butter and peanuts that was associated with decreased risk. In addition, these results were stronger with girls who had a family history of breast cancer.

Peanut butter is one of the most commonly consumed plant-proteins in America. In fact, peanut butter and peanuts account for 2/3 of all nuts eaten in the U.S. A peanut butter sandwich is not only an American favorite, but it is an affordable and nutrient dense food that can also reduce the risk of many chronic diseases. For more information visit www.peanut-institute.org.

The Peanut Institute is a non-profit organization that supports nutrition research and develops educational programs to encourage healthful lifestyles. Learn more about peanuts and health at www.peanut-institute.org

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