



# HEALTH NOTES



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Adventist Medical  
Evangelism Network

AMEN's mission is to motivate, train, and equip Seventh-day Adventist health-care professionals to team with pastors and members, uniting the church to restore Christ's ministry of healing to the world, hastening His return.

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## Are Nuts Fattening?

Nuts are high fat foods. For example, 100 grams of raw pecans are 72% fat by weight and 93% of the calories are from fat. Peanuts are not much better. Raw Virginia peanuts are 49% fat by weight and 78% of the calories are from fat. Fortunately, the fat in nuts is largely mono-unsaturated fat which is a healthy fat.

Even though nuts are high fat foods, they offer some protection from developing obesity.<sup>1</sup> A scientific study recently published involved 51,529 male health professionals 40-75 and 121,700 nurses 35-55 years of age. These people were followed for 20 years. They were 97% Caucasian and of a relatively high socioeconomic status.

Food intake was evaluated by a food frequency questionnaire that contained 130 items and was administered every four years. Nine different levels of nut consumption were investigated. Weight, height, and physical activity were determined at regular intervals as well.

A large portion of the population gained weight throughout the study. A total of 21,322 persons became obese with a BMI  $\geq 30$ . An increase in total consumption of all types of nuts, per 1/2 serving/day, was associated with a **3% lower risk** of becoming obese. Leaving peanuts out of the analysis, it was found that consumption of walnuts and other tree nuts, per 1/2 servings/day, was associated with a **15% lower risk** of developing obesity. Those with the highest tree nut consumption were **23% less likely** to become obese. Peanuts alone did not prevent obesity.

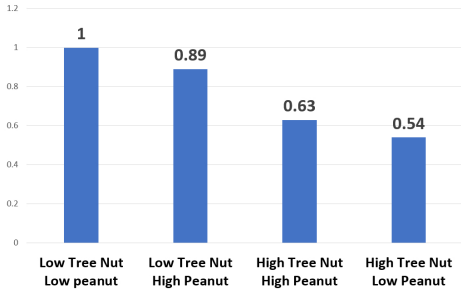
The Adventist Health Study published an article five years ago that showed similar results but on a much smaller sample of 804 individuals selected from the 96,000 population of the study.<sup>2</sup> Each person in this group was examined by study staff, blood samples, and physical measurements that were obtained.

The study compared and contrasted tree nut consumption with peanut consumption. This population was divided into four groups. (1) Those with low peanut and low tree nut consumption, (2) those with high peanut and low tree nuts consumption, (3) those with high tree nut and low peanut consumption, and (4) those with high peanut and high tree nut consumption.

The prevalence of obesity was measured. Not eating very many nuts was associated with the highest levels of obesity. High peanut intake with low tree nut intake resulted in an 11% reduction in the prevalence of obesity. Those who ate a high amount of tree nuts but a low amount of peanuts had a 46% less obesity prevalence than those whose consumption of peanuts and tree nuts was low.



## Obesity by Nut Intake



So contrary to common belief, a food high in fat actually can help prevent obesity. Tree nuts are superior to peanuts in producing this beneficial effect.

Not a lot of nuts are needed to produce a beneficial effect. Just one ounce a day, a small handful, 1/3 of a cup, is all that is needed for optimum nut intake and the prevention of obesity.

Pistachio nuts and almonds are two nuts mentioned in scripture. (Genesis 43:11)

**ELLEN WHITE** recommends nuts as a part of a simple diet. "Not a few of our people need instruction in regard to the principles of health reform... We need to keep more strictly to a simple diet of fruits, nuts, grains, and vegetables."

—*Counsels on Diets and Foods* 329

<sup>1</sup>Xiaoran Liu, et.al, "Changes in nut consumption influence long-term weight change in US men and women," British Medical Journal Nutrition, Prevention & Health, September 23, 2019, 10 pages.

<sup>2</sup>K. Jaceido-Siegl et.al, "Tree Nuts are Inversely Associated with Metabolic Syndrome and Obesity: The Adventist Health Study-2" PLOS ONE Vol 9, Issue 1, January 2014, 7 pages.

