You’re Nuts If You Don’t Try to Lower Your Cholesterol

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Peanuts. Pecans. Pistachios. Walnuts. Almonds. Macadamias. Is it nuts to think that these crunchy kernels might help your heart by cutting your levels of “bad” LDL cholesterol? Not at all, according to an analysis of studies about nut consumption published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* and reported by HealthDay News.

For the study, researchers at the Loma Linda University School of Public Health in California examined the data from 25 nut consumption trials with 583 men and women.

Scientists found that eating a third of a cup of nuts each day reduced total cholesterol levels by 5.1 percent and cut artery-clogging LDL by 7.4 percent.

The study offers “the best evidence yet that eating nuts reduces LDL cholesterol and improves the blood lipids profile,” said Joan Sabate, MD, DrPH, coauthor of the report and chair of Loma Linda University’s nutrition department.

And that’s just the start of nutso health benefits.

“Nuts are a matrix of healthy nutrients, and the most obvious reason for the cholesterol-lowering effect is their unsaturated fat content,” Sabate said. “[Plus] nuts also contain fiber, vegetable protein, phytoesterols and other antioxidants.”

But nuts are high in calories too so eating more can lead to weight gain, Sabate warned. (He suggested people not eat more than 3 ounces of nuts a day.)

What nuts should you eat for the most health benefits? According to Sabate, the study didn’t find much difference between almonds, hazelnuts, macadamias, peanuts, pecans, pistachios and walnuts.

For more about the fats in your diet and their effect on heart health, click here.

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