

Peanuts May Offer Same Health Benefits as Other Nuts

Source: Institute of Food Technologists

A study published in *JAMA Internal Medicine* shows that peanuts may have the same nutritional benefits as some pricier nuts, making peanuts' health benefits more accessible to lower-income consumers.

“Botanically, peanuts are not nuts, but nutritionally they are very similar to tree nuts, and other studies have shown their benefits,” said Meir Stampfer, professor of nutrition and epidemiology at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

The researchers looked at nut and peanut consumption in two large groups of people spanning geographic, racial, ethnic, and income boundaries:

- 72,000 Americans, aged 40–79, living in 12 Southern states. Most lived on low incomes and two-thirds were African American.
- 135,000 men and women in Shanghai, China, aged 40–74.

The researchers used surveys to tally nut and peanut consumption. They followed the groups for several years and counted how many participants died and from what causes. In the U.S. Southern states group, those who regularly ate peanuts were 21% less likely to have died of any cause over a period of about five years. In the Chinese groups, who were followed for six to 12 years, the death rate in nut-eaters was 17% lower.

For all the groups, the researchers accounted for unhealthy influences like smoking, obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes, which were especially common in the Southern states group. The researchers noted that the diversity of the participants in this study is important. Those in the earlier studies were mostly Caucasian health professionals who were more educated and earned higher incomes than most people in the Southern states group. However, because this study is observational, the researchers can't truly be certain that it is the peanuts that are causing the health benefits.