

# Nutrition Awareness Month

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## *“Nuts, I’ve got high cholesterol”*

It comes as no surprise to anyone these days that cardiovascular disease is our number one killer, and that high LDL cholesterol levels are a primary risk factor. What might surprise some is that good old nuts (as in walnuts, almonds, and hazelnuts) can help decrease our risk. Phytosterols are abundant in cereals, nuts, seeds and oils, and there is good evidence that they not only inhibit cholesterol absorption, but may also be able to lower blood LDL levels.

Researchers recently followed 3 groups of people for a year. All 3 groups increased their fruit consumption by 77gm/day and their vegetable consumption by 33 gm/day, and maintained a fairly low-fat diet (37% of total diet). In addition, group 1 increased olive oil intake by 11 gm/day, and group 2 increased nut consumption by 29 gm/day. By the end of the year both groups significantly decreased LDL levels, but the greatest effect was experienced by group 2.

Although more work is necessary to confirm that natural phytosterol-rich foods can have a cholesterol-lowering effect, it seems that adding nuts to a fruit and vegetable-based diet is a wise nutritional choice. But be careful that your overall caloric intake does not exceed your output. Otherwise you may be hearing yourself say, “Nuts, I’ve gained more weight.”

## How To Detect Dangerous Fad Diets

**Avoid** diets and any products that make the following claims-

- 1) Rapid Weight Loss- Slow, steady weight loss is more likely to last; aim for 1-2 pound(s) per week
- 2) Quantities & Limitations- Avoid diets that allow unlimited quantities of a particular food which become boring or diets that eliminate entire food groups which may lead to a lack of critical nutrients.
- 3) Specific Food Combinations- There is no evidence that eating certain foods or eating at specific times of the day will lead to weight loss.
- 4) Rigid Menus- Adhering to rigid menus can be overwhelming and difficult to follow. Successful weight loss is based on gradual healthy diet changes that can be maintained over the long run.
- 5) No Need to Exercise- Regular physical exercise is essential for good health and healthy weight management! The key to success is finding activities you enjoy and then aim for 30-60 minutes of activity on most days of the week

## Right Size Your Serving Size at Restaurants !

- Instead of a large entrée, order an appetizer and a leafy green salad or choose two appetizers for a meal.
- Start with a small serving like a cup of soup. If you are still hungry, order something else.
- Savor your steak twice as much. Eat half at the restaurant, then take the other half home to enjoy sliced onto a green salad or as a sandwich on whole-grain bread.
- Ask for a to-go box as soon as your meal is served. Put half your food into the container for a second meal.
- Share from start to finish. Order one appetizer for the whole table and then order one dessert with multiple forks.
- Share an entrée. You can ask your server to split the meal in the kitchen or divide it up yourselves at the table.

## Benefits of Eating a Healthy Breakfast...

- better attitude toward work, higher productivity and better ability to handle tasks that require memory
- better concentrations and problem solving skills
- reduces your risk of obesity (prolonged fasting increases your body’s insulin response which in turn increases fat storage and weight gain)

## Healthy Breakfast Suggestions...

- Whole-grain or bran cereal with low-fat milk and shaved almonds, served with a piece of fresh fruit
- Oatmeal topped with a sprinkle of brown sugar and walnut halves
- An egg-white omelet loaded with peppers and low-fat cheddar cheese in a toasted whole-wheat pita pocket and served with low-fat milk
- Multigrain pancakes or waffles topped with banana slices
- Nonfat yogurt topped with low-fat granola and dried apricots.

<http://www.eatright.org/Public/content.aspx?id=6442450997>, <http://www.eatright.org/Public/content.aspx?id=3261&terms=breakfast>,  
<http://www.eatright.org/Public/content.aspx?id=6851>, <http://www.eatright.org/Public/content.aspx?id=6850>, <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/food-and-nutrition/AN01119>; Escurriol et al. European Journal of Nutrition 48:373-382, 2009.