



Peanuts and “Good Fats”

For years health professionals thought that all fat was “BAD”. It is now widely accepted that there are “good” fats and “bad” fats.

The latest research has shown that unsaturated fat, mono- and poly- (plant based), can actually be beneficial for health.

What makes a good and bad fat?

(Reference: *The Peanut Institute: Food for Thought – Vol 4, Issue 2*)

Monounsaturated fat is missing one (mono) hydrogen on its chemical chain and is liquid at room temperature. Monounsaturated fat is found in plant foods like peanuts and peanut butter; vegetable oils like peanut, olive and canola oil; and avocados. Monounsaturated fat has been shown to lower total and LDL cholesterol, while maintaining beneficial HDL cholesterol.

Polyunsaturated fat is missing more than one (poly) hydrogen on its chemical chain and is also liquid at room temperature. It is found in plant foods like corn oil and soy oil and in fatty fish such as salmon and mackerel. Polyunsaturated fat also lowers total and LDL cholesterol, but may not have the same beneficial effect on HDL (good) cholesterol.

Saturated fat has all of the hydrogen that it can hold on its chemical chain (it is saturated) and is firm at room temperature. It is found mainly in animal products like butter, meat, milk and cheese. Saturated fat is called the “bad” fat because it has been shown to increase total and LDL (bad) cholesterol levels.

Trans fat results from adding hydrogen to unsaturated vegetable oils to increase shelf life and to improve texture. The hydrogen is added and crosses (trans) the chemical chain, making the fat more solid at room temperature. Trans fats tend to increase total and LDL cholesterol, and also may decrease HDL (good) cholesterol. **Peanuts are trans fat free.**

Cholesterol is a fat compound found only in some animal foods like meats, eggs, and full-fat dairy products. Because they are a plant food, peanuts and peanut butter are **naturally cholesterol-free**.

Total cholesterol is a measure of both HDL (good) and LDL (bad) cholesterol in the blood.

HDL (high-density lipoprotein) cholesterol is the “good” blood cholesterol, composed mostly of protein.

LDL (low-density lipoprotein) cholesterol is the “bad” cholesterol, composed mainly of fat.

Triglyceride level (TG) is a measure of the amount of circulating fat in the blood. TG is an emerging risk factor for heart disease.

A higher monounsaturated or “good” fat diet is heart healthy because it:

- Lowers total Cholesterol
- Lowers bad LDL Cholesterol
- Maintains beneficial HDL Cholesterol; and
- Lowers Triglycerides.

Peanuts are a healthy spread or snack alternative.

PEANUT BUTTER VS OTHER SPREADS

Spreads (1 Tbsp /16g)	Calories (kcal)	Sat Fat ¹ (g)	MUFA ² (g)	PUFA ³ (g)	Cholest erol (mg)	Carbs ⁴ (g)	Protein (g)	Vit E (mg-ATE)	Folate (mcg)	Fibre (g)
Peanut Butter	95	1.6	3.8	2.2	0.0	6.2	4.0	1.6	11.8	0.9
Butter	101	7.2	3.3	0.4	31.0		0.1	0.22	0.4	0.0
Margarine	101	1.8	5.4	3.3	0.0	0.12		6.3		0.0
Cream Cheese	50	3.2	1.4	0.2	15.9	0.39	1.1	0.14	1.9	0.0
Jam	56			0.0	0.0	13.8		0.0	6.6	0.2

PEANUTS VS OTHER SNACKS

Spreads (1 ox / 32g)	Calories (kcal)	Sat Fat ¹ (g)	MUFA ² (g)	PUFA ³ (g)	Cholesterol (mg)	Carbs ⁴ (g)	Protein (g)	Vit E mg-ATE)	Folate (mcg)	Fibre (g)
Peanuts	160	1.9	6.9	4.4	0	4.6	7.3	2.6	68.0	2.4
Potato Chips	152	3.1	2.8	3.4	0	15.0	2.0	1.4	12.8	1.3
Pretzels	108	0.2	0.4	0.3	0	22.4	2.6	0.06	48.5	0.9
Rice Cakes	70	0.1	0.2	0.2	0	14.7	1.4	0.13	3.8	0.7
Crackers	142	1.1	3.0	2.6	0	17.4	2.0	1.2	22.0	0.4

Reference: US Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service
1998 USDA Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Release 12

¹ Saturated Fat, ² Monounsaturated Fat, ³ Polyunsaturated Fat, ⁴ Carbohydrate

Note: Peanuts DO NOT CONTAIN cholesterol or trans fats.

For further information on nutrition refer www.pca.com.au

Peanut Institute Web Site

- www.peanut-institute.org



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