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Pistachios

The health benefits of nuts have been demonstrated in many studies. In general, nuts have been shown to have protective heart health benefits and provide a good source of protein and dietary fiber, along with many important vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients. But all nuts are not created equal.

Nutritional Benefits of Pistachios

A 30g serving (about 1 ounce) of pistachios has 49 kernels, 170 calories and offers more than 30 different vitamins, minerals and beneficial phytonutrients. This little nut comes out big on nutrition: an excellent source of copper, manganese and vitamin B6 and a good source of protein, dietary fiber, thiamin and phosphorus. Pistachios offer a high amount of total polyphenol antioxidants and are the only nut to offer significant amounts of lutein and zeaxanthin. Pistachios also offer a high satiety level and as an in-shell snack, have a slower consumption time.

Only Nut to Contain Significant Amounts of Lutein and Zeaxanthin

Pistachios are the only nut to contain a significant amount of the carotenoids lutein and zeaxanthin. The intake of these carotenoids has been associated with a reduced risk of age-related macular degeneration (AMD). AMD is the most common cause of irreversible blindness in Americans over 65.

Excellent Source of Important Vitamins and Minerals

Pistachios are an excellent source of copper and manganese and a good source of phosphorus. Pistachios are also an excellent source of vitamin B6, containing as much as beef liver, which is often touted as an “especially rich source” of this vitamin. Per serving, pistachios provide 20% of the Daily Value. In addition to vitamin B6, pistachios are a good source of thiamin (15% DV) and contain lesser amounts of other B vitamins, such as folate and biotin at 4% DV, and riboflavin, niacin, and pantothenic acid at 2% DV.

One of the Highest Fiber Nuts

Most Americans take in much less than the recommended 14 grams of fiber per 1000 calories. As one of the highest fiber nuts, pistachios can help meet this goal. A serving of pistachio nuts provides 3 grams of dietary fiber, or about 12% of the Daily Value. This is twice the fiber in an ounce of walnuts, and about the same amount as in a serving of oatmeal.

References 1. US Department of Health and Human Services, and US Department of Agriculture. (2005). Dietary Guidelines for Americans