

PISTACHIOS AND WEIGHT MANAGEMENT



Pistachios are one of the lowest calorie and lowest fat nuts and they are a good source of fiber. The good news about pistachios and weight management just keeps adding up. Here's the scoop on the latest research about pistachios:



IN-SHELL PISTACHIOS MAY CURB CALORIE INTAKE

Pistachios are one of the only in-shell snack nuts, pistachios may help slow consumption while the empty shells may serve as a visual portion cue, potentially helping to reduce calorie intake. This effect is known as the "Pistachio Principle." Behavioral eating expert Dr. James Painter, PhD, RD, Chair of the School of the Family and Consumer Sciences at Eastern Illinois University developed the "Pistachio Principle" as a simple technique to describe calorie reduction without restriction.

Illustrating the "Pistachio Principle," Dr. Painter's recent behavioral nutritional research published in the journal *Appetite*, observed that participants who consumed in-shell pistachios ate 41-percent fewer calories compared to those who consumed shelled pistachios. Those who chose shelled pistachios consumed an average of 211 calories, while those who chose in-shell pistachios consumed an average of 125 calories suggesting that empty shells may be a helpful visual cue about how much has been eaten - thereby potentially encouraging reduced calorie consumption.

Although causation has not yet been proven, this study suggests that in-shell pistachios can be a delicious snack that may help support weight management efforts.

PISTACHIOS MAY CONTAIN FEWER CALORIES THAN PREVIOUS CALCULATIONS INDICATE

A small preliminary 2011 study conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and published in the *British Journal of Nutrition*, suggests that pistachios may actually contain 5 percent fewer calories per serving than originally calculated.¹ A reduced serving of 30 pistachios offers about 100 calories along with fiber, protein, vitamins and minerals, making it a nutritious and satisfying snack.

NUT CONSUMPTION MAY BE ASSOCIATED WITH WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

A preliminary study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* and conducted by researchers at Harvard University suggests that a diet high in nuts, fruits, vegetables, and whole grains may be associated with less weight gain over time.² Further, a small preliminary study published in the *Journal of the American College of Nutrition* by researchers at UCLA suggests but does not prove that controlled portions of pistachios, when substituted for controlled portions of refined carbohydrate foods, such as pretzels, in the diet, may be associated with weight management.

Despite these promising results, neither study prove causation and further research is needed to determine the role of pistachios in weight management.³

PISTACHIO RESOURCES

PistachioHealthInstitute.org is the leading online source of information on the health and nutrition benefits of pistachios for both consumers and health professionals. It houses a comprehensive research library, with research updates and information from leading experts in the field of health and nutrition, including the Health Nut blog, Ask Our Expert section, and educational materials. The Institute is committed to advancing the understanding of the health benefits of pistachios, and continues to invest and support research at leading institutions around the world. "Like" Pistachio Health Institute on [Facebook](#) and follow @PistachioHealth on [Twitter](#).

IN A NUTSHELL:

Pistachios top the charts when it comes to a smart, everyday snack nut that supports the maintenance of a healthy weight. As one of the lowest calorie and lowest fat nuts, which is also a good source of fiber, pistachios offer a trio of nutritional benefits that add up to a weight-sensible snacking choice.

REFERENCES:

1. Baer, D.J., Gebauer, S.K., & Novotny, J.A. "Measured energy value of pistachios in the human diet." *Br J Nutr.* 2011, p. 1-7. 2. Mozaffarian D, Hao T, Rimm EB, Willett WC, and Hu FB. Changes in Diet and Lifestyle and Long-Term Weight Gain in Women and Men. *The New England Journal of Medicine.* 2011;364(25), 2392-404. 3. Li, Z., Song, R., Nguyen, C., Zerlin, A., Karp, et al. Pistachio nuts reduce triglycerides and body weight by comparison to refined carbohydrate snack in obese subjects on a 12-week weight loss program. *J Am Coll Nutr.* 2010(29);3:198-203.