

Use your nut for heart health

People with diabetes are two to four times more likely to develop heart disease than people without diabetes. The prevention and treatment of CVD by diet is an important issue both for people with diabetes and those without.

Although rates of heart disease - cardiovascular disease (CVD) - are declining in many developed countries, it remains the number one cause of death.

Research reviewed by Nuts For Life showed people who regularly eat a handful of nuts absorb less fat, as the fibrous walls in nuts help stop the body from absorbing up to 20 per cent of the fat in nuts. Plus, the high amount of protein, fibre and unsaturated fats in nuts work hard to suppress hunger so you are likely to feel fuller for longer. Another benefit is that regular consumption of nuts boosts resting metabolic rates by 5-10 per cent.

“It’s important people understand the difference between good fats and bad fats so they know that healthy-fat plant foods such as nuts are good for them, rather than thinking they are bad because you will gain weight,” New Zealand Nutrition Foundation dietitian Sarah Hanrahan says.

Different tree nuts have a variety of nutritional profiles, but studies have concluded that almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, chestnuts, hazelnuts, macadamias, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios and walnuts all contain the beneficial nutrients for heart health.

A small serving of nuts (unsalted, unroasted) four to five times per week has been observed to reduce the risk of CVD in population studies. A serve of nuts is equivalent to one dessert spoon of nuts.

Intervention studies have shown that the addition of nuts to the diet can help to lower blood cholesterol levels, reduce the oxidation of low density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol and improve a number of other indices related to CVD risk.

Nuts & Seeds

BETTER BUYS

- > Non-roasted, non-salted nuts.
- > Oven-bake or pan roast raw nuts and seeds at home. For additional flavour add lime juice and spices such as paprika, cayenne pepper, ground coriander, low salt soy or cumin.

GOOD TO KNOW

- > Buy nuts in the shell as having to crack them open slows down the amount you eat.
- > Chestnuts are low in fat (2-7%).
- > Most nuts contain monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats and up to 30g per day or a small handful can form part of a heart healthy diet.
- > To keep nuts in the best condition, store them in an airtight container in the refrigerator or freezer. Nuts can be refrigerated up to 4 months and frozen up to 6 months.



Freekah & Chickpea Salad

SERVES 4

SALAD

1 cup Alison's Pantry freekah

3 cups water

1 x 400 gram can chickpeas,
drained and rinsed

3 teaspoons olive oil

Pinch salt ½ cup Alison's Pantry walnuts,
roughly chopped and toasted

⅓ cup Alison's Pantry sunflower seeds, toasted

2 – 3 cups kale, finely shredded

75 grams goats cheese, roughly chopped

⅓ cucumber, sliced

½ avocado, sliced

DRESSING

Juice of ½ lemon

3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

1 teaspoon maple syrup

1 tablespoon Dijon mustard

1 clove garlic, minced

⅔ cup olive oil

SALAD

1. Bring water to boil in a pot. Add freekah and reduce the heat to a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally for approximately 30 minutes or until all the water has been absorbed. Remove the pot from the heat.
2. While the freekah is cooking, toast the sunflower seeds and walnuts. In a small pot or pan add 1 teaspoon olive oil, walnuts and sunflower seeds. Gently heat and continuously move about so that they do not burn. Toast for 3 minutes, remove from heat and set aside.
3. Heat a large fry pan or wok over medium heat. Add 2 teaspoons olive oil, salt, chickpeas and freekah. Toss about for 5 minutes so that everything is hot. Remove from heat and transfer to serving bowl.
4. Add the shredded kale, cucumber, cheese, avocado, toasted walnuts and sunflower seeds to the freekah base.

DRESSING

1. In a medium bowl, place the lemon juice, balsamic vinegar, maple syrup, garlic and mustard and whisk together until all ingredients are combined.
2. Pour on top of salad and toss. Enjoy!

This recipe was created by Julia & Libby for Alison's Pantry.





Nut & Spinach Loaf

200g spinach leaves
2 cups Alison's Pantry Unsalted Supreme Roast Mixed Nuts
1 small onion, finely chopped
1 carrot, grated
200g tinned whole tomatoes, drained and chopped
50g sundried tomatoes in olive oil, chopped
3 large eggs, lightly beaten
100g tasty cheese, grated
½ tsp dried sage
½ tsp mint, finely chopped
1 ½ tbsp. parsley, finely chopped
1 clove of garlic, crushed
1 tsp vegetable stock
Freshly ground black pepper

1. Preheat oven to 180°C.
2. Line a loaf tin with baking paper and grease with butter, also cut a piece of baking paper to cover the top of the tin, and grease with butter.
3. Blanch spinach in boiling water, drain well, squeeze out water and chop finely.
4. Put nuts into a food processor and pulse until chopped, take care not to reduce to a flour.
5. Tip chopped nuts and all other ingredients into a large bowl and mix together well.
6. Place mixture in the prepared loaf tin and place baking paper on top, butter side down.
7. Cook for approximately 1 hour until the loaf is cooked through.
8. Let cool for a couple of minutes then carefully turn out onto a plate and slice to serve.
9. Serve with a gravy or sauce of your choice – is great with a mushroom gravy.

Diabetes New Zealand is a leading national organisation and registered charity. Our aim is to support all people affected by diabetes to live well through: Providing information and support to help people take charge of their health • Acting as an advocate and representing all people with, or at risk of developing, diabetes • Raising awareness of diabetes, especially around lifestyle factors that can help prevent or delay type 2 and help manage and control type 1 and type 2.