

Be On Watch For Nutty Health Claims

"I've been eating more nuts lately because I know they're good for you, but my wife doesn't believe it. Is there firm evidence?" Well, you two could very well be dueling nutritional scientists, because even they haven't come to an agreement on whether nuts are "good for you" — as in helping protect against heart disease — or not. But there is at least some evidence that the mono- and polyunsaturated fats and possibly the phytochemicals found in nuts can be good for the heart. And, nuts have fiber, too.

But beware. Grabbing a handful of nuts here and there and popping them like vitamin pills won't do you much good, unless you need to put on a few pounds. One and half ounces of nuts — about one-third of a cup, the amount usually recommended for potential heart-healthy benefits — contains about 250 calories. If you sim-

ply add this to your daily diet, those extra calories will add up to 3,500 in just 14 days. Adding 3,500 calories to your diet without increasing activity will add a pound to your weight. Over the course of a year, you could put on 26 pounds by adding 1.5 ounces of nuts to your daily diet.

What you can do is substitute nuts for other high-calorie foods you currently consume. Do you keep a package of potato chips in the cupboard for snacking? One-and-a-half ounces of regular potato chips contain about 230 calories. A 1.5-ounce chocolate bar contains about 235 calories. A 20-ounce bottle of cola has about 260 calories.

You can also substitute nuts for protein foods in your diet: A 3-ounce broiled burger (80 percent lean ground beef) contains 230 calories. Three and a half ounces of dark-meat chicken

(roasted, with the skin) contains 255 calories. A nut-based dish, such as a vegetable stir-fry with almonds, could be a good alternative.

And be discriminating about what nuts you choose: almonds, hazelnuts, pecans, pistachios, walnuts and peanuts are the only ones that can use a newly approved qualified health claim that "Scientific evidence suggests, but does not prove, that eating 1.5 ounces of most nuts as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease." Brazil nuts, cashews, macadamia nuts didn't make the cut.

Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1044, or filipic.3@osu.edu.

Family Living Focus

by
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The Picky Eater

Has mealtime become a battleground between you and your preschooler?

The same spirit of independence that a parent rewards when his child is able to dress himself, becomes a less attractive quality when it results in a picky eater at mealtime.

It's important to put it all in perspective. The preschool years are marked by bouts of independence and are a natural part of growing up. Certain techniques and strategies will help parents to cope with the young, opinionated eater and ease mealtime struggles.

Should you worry that your child is not getting a nutritious diet? During this period, a child's growth slows down a bit and your child may really not be hungry. It is important that a child listens to what his body is saying and does not learn to eat when he is really not hungry. That's a bad habit that gets a lot of adults in trouble! At this age, a child is also more interested in exploring the world than eating.

A portion size is one tablespoon for each year of a preschooler's age. This means that a serving for a four-year-old is only one-quarter cup! Not very much by adult standards. When you

look at it this way, most children are eating better than their parents think.

Is your child eating a variety of foods? To determine this, you really need to look at more than one day. If your child didn't have anything from the dairy group today, that might not be a reason to worry. If she hasn't had any dairy products for the last week, it's time to get creative. Make pudding, offer ice cream or cream soups, macaroni and cheese-whatever your child is likely to eat.

Continue to offer new foods — but remember, many children need to be offered a new food 8 to 10 times before they try it and accept it.

Don't give up. Offer new foods with familiar, well-liked foods and let your child see you eating and enjoying the new food.

Most important, remember that no childhood phase lasts forever! Soon your picky eater will go through a growth spurt and be willing to eat just about anything.

In the meantime, keep mealtime pleasant and relaxing. Respect your child's likes and dislikes. After all as adults, each of us has foods we don't like.

By offering a variety of healthy foods at regular mealtimes and planned snack times, your child will learn to enjoy a variety of nutritious foods.

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