SENIOR SENSE
Putting Knowledge to Work for Older Georgians

Your Health

The Health Benefits of Peanuts

Have you quit eating peanuts because they are high in fat? While a fat-controlled diet is good, choosing the right sources of fat in our diet is important. Some high fat foods are full of empty calories. But other higher fat foods can be rich sources of important nutrients. Peanuts are one of the higher fat foods that may be worth keeping in your diet.

First, peanuts may be an important part of a heart-healthy diet. Peanuts contain no cholesterol and are low in saturated fat. While one ounce of peanuts does have nearly 14 grams of fat, most of the fat is from monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. These fats have been shown to lower risk for heart disease when they make up a larger portion of your total fat intake. This means that these fats should substitute for the saturated fat in your diet and not be added to the your total fat intake. You should still keep your total fat intake to 30% or less per day. But less than 10% should be from saturated fat.

Other heart-healthy nutrients in peanuts are folate, Vitamin E, resveratrol (the substance found in red wine), and copper. A study of members of the Seventh Day Adventist Church found that frequent consumption of nuts decreased risk for heart disease.

Peanuts also provide significant amounts of niacin, magnesium, boron and manganese. These nutrients help with bone health, energy metabolism, nerve transmission and glucose tolerance.

While no one food is going to solve all your problems, peanuts are one of the better snacks you can choose. They certainly out-shine potato chips, the most popular snack eaten by Americans. Choose peanuts
that are dry roasted and unsalted. Eat them in small amounts or add them to favorite foods like casseroles, desserts, breads and salads.

If you cannot chew peanuts, choose peanut butter. Try fresh ground peanut butter and you can eliminate the salt, sugar and hydrogenated fat added to many commercial peanut butters.

Not all fat is bad. It is the kind of fat you choose and the company it keeps that determines whether it is worth using in your diet.

**Rise and Shine Muffins**

1 cup high fiber bran cereal, crushed
2/3 cup skim milk
1/4 cup crunchy peanut butter
1 cup coarsely grated apple
½ cup coarsely grated zucchini
½ cup coarsely grated carrot
2/3 cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon maple extract
1 whole egg
2 egg whites
1 3/4 cup whole wheat flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
1 tablespoon orange peel
2 teaspoons cinnamon
cooking spray

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. Mix milk and cereal in large bowl. Let stand 5 minutes until softened.
3. Fold in peanut butter, apple, zucchini, carrot, sugar, and extract until well mixed.
4. In small bowl, beat the egg and egg whites. Add to bran mixture.
5. In a small bowl combine the baking powder, orange peel and cinnamon. Add to the bran mixture but do not overmix.
7. Place shallow pan of water on bottom rack of oven to prevent muffins from drying out.
8. Bake 20-25 minutes on middle oven rack.
9. Remove from pans and serve immediately. 12 servings

Each muffin contains:

| Calories: | 161 |
| Protein:  | 6 grams |
| Fat:      | 4 grams |
| Carbohydrate: | 30 grams |
| Fiber:    | 3 grams |
| Cholesterol: | 23 milligrams |
| Sodium:   | 221 milligrams |
| Diabetic Exchanges: | 2 starches and 1 fat |

*Adapted from a Georgia Peanut Commission recipe in Harvest a Gold Mine of Nutrition Cookbook*

**Your Resources**

**Lighting the Home for the Elderly**

Changes that occur in people’s
vision as they age require bright lighting essential both for safety and comfort. The eyes of the older people tend to adapt more slowly to changes in the light level. They also are less tolerant of bright light and more prone to night blindness.

Older persons also have increased sensitivity to light and glare, which can make some daytime activities for them more difficult. Sheer curtains and blinds can remove the glare and adjust light so that looking outside can be a comfortable experience.

Reduced acuity of the eyes makes objects appear fuzzy and unclear. A combination of glare and reduced acuity can "hide" objects from older people. For example, white towels and light-colored combs or brushes can be virtually invisible when placed on shiny, white bathroom counters.

Stairs can be particularly dangerous, because a person may not be able to see where the top or bottom stair is, miss a step and fall. Placing a contrasting color strip on the edge of each stair step can make the steps more visible. Providing good lighting and a handrail also will add to the safety of a staircase.

These changes make moving about at night a potential problem. Older people are not able to see objects sharply when they are entering a darkened room. They must wait a few moments for their eyes to adjust to newly turned-on lights. Night lights permit people to find their way safely about the home.

Your Relationships

Parents and Adult Children

As seniors, parents want most to have caring, sharing ties with their family. They place a high value on a give-and-take with their grown children. They view their children as friends, and continue to be interested
in their activities and welfare.

We sometimes think of older people as needing help or attention from younger family members, such as transportation, home repairs, shopping, or a listening ear. In fact, giving is an enduring part of the parental role—parents continue to provide, as well as to receive support. This ability to give to their children has a positive impact on the older parent’s own well-being. Parents enjoy feeling needed and loved, and they are flattered when asked for advice. Those who feel competent as a parent and have open, affectionate communication with their children, feel better about themselves.

Contrary to popular beliefs and stereotypes, seniors are not usually abandoned by family members. Most surveys find that from one-half to three-fourths of older parents maintain face-to-face contact with their adult children once a week or at least several times a month. Even when parents live some distance from their children, they stay in touch, and older parents are usually satisfied with their family relationships. It is important to recognize that parenthood is no longer the primary source of identity for older adults. As children have become independent, parents have also reorganized their lives. Parents and children are able to have regular contact with each other while maintaining their own activities and identities.

There are few clear-cut guidelines for how older parents and their adult children should act with each other. For the first time, adults are living well into old age, and it is not unusual for families to be composed of four or more generations. Parents and children are sometimes uncertain about what to expect from each other, and there are few role models for how they should behave in middle-age and later life.

Parents are sometimes concerned about how to negotiate the time they would like with their children without interfering in their children’s lives. Parents wonder how to discuss what they would like done
for long-term arrangements, medical emergencies, funeral arrangements, and disposition of their property after death. At the same time, children may feel more protective of their parents than in the past.

When an adult child is a caregiver, the relationship between parent and child changes. Often, the child becomes increasingly responsible for daily activities such as feeding, toileting, and bathing. Some adult children believe that in the caregiving relationship a role reversal occurs, with the child taking over decision-making for the parent. In contrast, parents seem to view this as a trade-off rather than a reversal. They have had to give up some decision-making authority to receive the caregiving they need.

Most experts agree that in healthy parent-child relationships, role reversal does not take place. The parent is always the parent—the one who gave birth, taught the child right from wrong, loved him or her, and watched him or her go through the many phases of child and adult development.

However, a role shift does take place when a parent is very frail or has severe problems with cognitive functioning, and the adult child becomes a caregiver. In these situations, adult children carry out some of the same activities as a parent. This does not change the fact that the senior has a long history of providing care and a deep understanding of the adult child’s personality, problems and successes, and life changes. The senior also has years of living and learning that are not erased when caregiving begins.

Even though a parent may need to relinquish some duties, there are other ways for them to continue to express their support and to feel their worth. For example, a parent could continue to offer advice and wisdom gained from many years of experience and study. Also, to preserve the older person’s integrity and independence, caregivers should encourage the senior to make his or her own decisions as much as possible.

Throughout life, a give-and-take across all the generations is a sign of family well-being. Older parents can continue to provide care for their children and their grandchildren until they are no longer able. Middle-aged children do receive love and aid from their parents and can also help their parents as needed. Grandchildren and children both give to and receive from the older generations.

Dear Friend:

SENIOR SENSE is a quarterly publication provided by your local county Extension Service office. It is prepared by Extension Family & Consumer Sciences specialists at The University of Georgia specifically for the educational needs of older Georgians.

Please contact your local Extension Service office for more information on these and related topics.

Putting Knowledge to Work

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