

Eating Vegetable Proteins the Healthy "Weigh"

Plant protein sources have been making nutrition headlines for years. The recent health news about nuts, seeds, and legumes (dried beans and peas) has been especially positive. Vegetarian or meat-eater, you can easily enjoy all the benefits of these delicious foods.

1. **NUTS** for health

No longer a nutrition no-no, nuts are a good source of omega-3 fatty acids. These "good fats" can help lower cholesterol and fight heart disease. A small handful, about an ounce, makes a satisfying (and tasty!) snack - or a delicious topping to a leafy green salad.

2. **NUT BUTTERS** for health

Peanut butter isn't just for kids anymore. Research show that sensible amounts of nut butters can help adults stick to a healthful eating style - and lose weight. Balance the fat in peanut butter by spreading it on apples slice, celery sticks or whole-grain crackers.

3. **SEEDS** for health

Seeds, like sunflower and sesame, also offer nutrition benefits, rich flavors and crunchy textures. Like nuts, they make tasty additions to fruit salads, trail mix, homemade breads and other baked goodies. Try some sunflower seeds and walnuts in oatmeal cookies.

4. **BEANS** for health

Versatile, tasty and inexpensive - beans are a real nutrition bonanza. Packed with protein, complex carbohydrates, B-vitamins and fiber, enjoy beans in soups, salads, burritos and dips. Good news for quick meals - canned beans are just as nutritious as the dried ones.

5. **SOY FOODS** for health

Soybeans are the most versatile of all the legumes. As soy milk, soy cheese, tofu, TVP (texturized vegetable protein) products and edamame (whole, green soybeans), soy protein can help reduce the risk of heart disease, cancer and osteoporosis.

6. **SPLIT PEAS** and **LENTILS** for health

Like their bean cousins, peas and lentils go great in soups and salads. Like beans, a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup serving counts as a protein serving - and as a 5 a Day vegetable serving at the same time. That's a nutrition combo that is hard to beat!



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