

# Will nut consumption cure or prevent what ails you?

By ACSH Staff — April 2, 2015



In her latest [column](#) <sup>[1]</sup> in the *New York Times*, Jane Brody waxes

enthusiastic about the nutritional benefits of peanut and tree nut consumption. She cites studies showing that the more nuts people ate, the lower their risk of dying. This was true for rich and poor, as well as for different ethnic groups, she points out. In addition, she also cites a [study](#) <sup>[2]</sup> that found that the more nuts non-allergic pregnant women consumed, the less likely their offspring were to develop allergies against those foods.

These were, however, observational studies, not controlled clinical trials, so the best that can be said for them is that they demonstrated a link between nut consumption and improved health and lower risk of children developing allergies. And of course they relied on participants self-reports of food consumption, which is not necessarily accurate. One can't say from this type of study that the nut consumption was actually responsible for the beneficial effect.

Be that as it may, it is certainly true that most nuts provide both protein and non-saturated fats, and are better snacking choices than many other foods available in our markets today. And some are also valuable sources of minerals e.g. calcium and magnesium fiber and vitamins.

Also, Ms. Brody points out, that although nuts are high in fats, they don't seem to cause weight gain, and indeed may help those trying to lose weight. This paradoxical effect, she suggests, may be due to the satiating effect of their high fat and protein content, as well as their resistance to breakdown by gastrointestinal enzymes.

ACSH's Dr. Ruth Kava agrees: For sure, nuts are a valuable component of healthy diets, as long as one is not allergic to them. Whether or not nut allergies can be prevented or treated remains to be proven by further research.

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## Links

[1] <http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/03/30/nuts-are-a-nutritional-powerhouse-for-rich-and-poor/>

[2] <http://http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=1793699>