

By [Kirsten Whittaker](#)

According to new research the health benefits of walnuts include lowering heart disease risks. It seems these tasty treats contain a higher quality of antioxidants than any of the other nuts tested in study.

We know that nuts are good for the heart, they not only bring down cholesterol and inflammation they also cut oxidative stress brought on by free radicals.

Experts know that antioxidants protect the cells of the body against damage that's caused by free radicals. This damage contributes to many health conditions, including heart disease.

Earlier studies have found that walnuts enhance blood flow and reduce cardiac risk factors, both beneficial to your heart. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration agrees that eating nuts as part of a heart healthy diet might just lower your risk for heart disease.

Of course, this assumes that your nuts aren't covered with salt, chocolate or sugar....

The nuts evaluated included almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamias, peanuts, pecans, pistachios and walnuts. The team found that an ounce of walnuts contained higher levels of antioxidants than the total of what most people get from fruits and veggies.

A handful of walnuts has two times the antioxidants as an equal amount of the other commonly eaten nuts. What's more, the antioxidants in walnuts appear to be from 2 to 15 times more effective than those in the other nuts.

Walnuts, in contrast to the others, are eaten raw rather than roasted.

Nuts, however, have gotten a bad rap from many for being high in fat and calories. It is true that you need to eat them in moderation.

One ounce of walnuts contains 185 calories, but it also delivers 4g of protein, almost 2g of fiber and over 18 grams of heart healthy fats - polyunsaturated and monosaturated fats/omega-3s. When you add a small serving of nuts to your diet, Vinson points out that research finds you're far more likely to either maintain or lose weight.

Nuts are also emerging as having a benefit to brain health.

As a snack, walnuts are ideal. They're portable, affordable, easy to take along and aren't empty calories that will leave you hungry in an hour. Instead as few as 7 walnuts a day are enough to get the antioxidant benefits and have you feeling full, so you're less likely to snack or over indulge at your next meal.

And yet they are not as popular as you might expect. But that may change as we learn more about these tasty, nutrition rich little packages, beyond being loaded with antioxidants, they also offer a unique combination of protein, vitamins and minerals, are dairy and gluten free and make a healthy alternative to meat.

No one is saying to replace other good for you foods with walnuts, but rather to think of the health benefits of walnuts as a rich source of powerful antioxidants and other beneficial nutrients to enjoy in moderation. In case you're curious, Brazil nuts came in second place in terms of antioxidant content.

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