

# New Research Shows Potential Benefits of Swapping Some Meat Intake with Walnuts

INSTANBUL, TURKEY, January 31, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Food trends are constantly evolving and one of the most exciting trends for 2024 is focused on putting the “plant” back in “plant-based”.<sup>1</sup>

One easy way to include more plant-based foods in the diet is considering walnuts as a partial replacement for meat in a meal or snack for added nutrition benefits. Walnuts are a versatile, nutritious, and delicious

plant-based protein option that works well with a variety of global sweet or savory flavors and pairs well with other ingredients. Walnuts also have the ability to take on the texture and consistency of ground meat, allowing for seamless integration into a variety of recipes.

New research suggests that walnuts, when substituted for meat, may improve diet quality, support cardiovascular health and lower the risk for developing type 2 diabetes and overall all-cause mortality.<sup>2,3</sup>

In a recent modeling study published in *Nutrients*, an international, peer-reviewed, open access journal of human nutrition and funded by the California Walnut Commission, researchers examined the potential benefits to nutrient intake and diet quality by replacing some meat in the diet with walnuts. The researchers used data from the 2015 - 2018 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), to model the nutrient intake of the US population with and without walnuts. Specifically, 0.5, 1, 1.5 and 2 ounces of walnuts per day replaced 1, 2, 3 and 4 ounces of meat.

The modeling study found that the partial replacement of meat with walnuts in the diet:<sup>2</sup>

- Improved the overall diet quality.
- Increased intake of omega-3 ALA, fiber, magnesium and copper.



California Walnuts

- Significantly decreased cholesterol and vitamin B12.

o Important to note: all age and gender groups maintained vitamin B12 intake above the recommended daily allowance when replacing 2–3 ounces of meat with walnuts.

Notably, the study found that replacing just 1 – 1.5 oz of meat with walnuts may improve the dietary intake of some nutrients, such as dietary fiber, magnesium, and "good" polyunsaturated fatty acids, including omega-3 ALA, and may decrease the intake of cholesterol. The study also found that all age and gender groups may benefit from incorporating walnuts into their diets.\*

"It's no surprise that there are benefits to eating more plant-based foods. What's most encouraging to see, however, is that these benefits can occur by including something as simple, easy-to-find, and versatile as nuts, like walnuts, in the diet," said Dr. Wendy Bazilian, DrPH, RDN. "Of course, we know that the many positive attributes of walnuts are already supported by over three decades of health-related research examining the effect of consumption on areas of whole-body health. And now, we're seeing the impressive effects that simple swaps from animal-based products can make when nutritious and tasty walnuts are used."

### Unlock the Walnut Effect That May Elevate Your Diet and Well-being

It is also easy to see the plant-based revolution across the Middle East as well. Supermarket shelves are stocked with an ever-growing range of plant-based substitutes, restaurants are adding meat and dairy free options to their menus in a way never seen before. Despite the meat-centric diet of Arab households, the region's market for plant-based alternatives is seeing explosive growth. According to the UK-based Triton Market Research, the MEA's plant-based food and beverage market is expected to achieve a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 8.35% between 2021 and 2028. The figure is not far from the projected CAGR of 12.11% for the global plant-based food market over the next decade, as forecasted by US market researcher IMARC.<sup>4</sup>

A few examples of plant-based meat swaps with walnuts include:

- Give the classic masala a twist by adding flavor and texture from plants and walnuts; Walnut Spinach Chicken Masala
- Prepping a big batch of walnut paneer kofta ahead of time makes mealtime easy throughout the week with California Walnut Paneer Kofta..
- Elevate the ultimate comfort with healthy snacks– veg cutlets: Potato and California Walnut Veg Cutlets

A 1-ounce serving of walnuts, the equivalent of a handful, provides a powerhouse of important nutrients for optimum health, including:<sup>3</sup>

- An excellent source of alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), the plant-based omega-3 fatty acid (2.5g) – the only nut with a significant amount.
- 4g of protein
- 2g of fiber
- A good source of magnesium (45mg)

#### Additional Support

Evidence continues to build demonstrating the benefits of incorporating more plant-based foods into a daily eating pattern. A new meta-analysis published in BMC Medicine investigates the association between substituting animal-based foods with plant-based foods and the risk of cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes and all-cause mortality.<sup>5</sup>

Researchers found that substituting one serving per day of processed meat (approximately 50 grams) with one serving per day of nuts (between 10 and 50 grams), such as walnuts, was associated with a lower risk of cardiovascular diseases and type 2 diabetes. Furthermore, the study revealed a lower risk of all-cause mortality when replacing red meat with nuts or whole grains. Overall, results suggested that nuts, including walnuts, can be a beneficial substitute for animal-based foods to reduce the risk of certain diseases.<sup>^</sup>

Continue to learn more about the research supporting walnuts and from this recipe collection for even more “walnut meat” inspiration.

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\* While these results have positive outcomes, this study used diet modeling and advanced statistical techniques to assess nutrient intakes, so no true intervention or observational analysis was done. Well-designed randomized clinical trials are needed to confirm these results.

^ A meta-analysis offers a comprehensive look at findings among patients of various backgrounds and more research is needed in order to strengthen the existing evidence. While results are informative, the findings do not show cause and effect. Additionally, the included studies were observational and unknown confounding factors could not be ruled out. Due to the observational design of the included studies, they can often include an element of selection bias.

About California Walnut Commission:

The California Walnut Commission (CWC), established in 1987, is funded by mandatory assessments of the growers. The Commission is an agency of the State of California that works in concurrence with the Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA). The CWC is mainly involved in health research and export market development activities. For more industry information, health research and recipe ideas, visit [www.walnuts.org](http://www.walnuts.org).

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