

# Health benefits of pistachios



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Pistachios also known as Pistacia Vera are small trees in the Anacardiaceae family. They originated from Turkmenistan, Pakistan, Greece, Iran, Turkey, Syria, India, Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan. Pistachio produces cookery kernel that is in a hard shell. In order to utilize it, the nut is cracked first. Mostly the pistachio substance is used as a snack and when cooking sausages, salami and other food products. In addition, the kernel is useful in the confectionary industry in making ice cream, chocolate, Turkish Delight, traditional Turkish sweets, and cakes. It is the best nut in the world compared to other nuts (Aldemir et al 2).

Pistachios originated from Middle East and, are among the oldest flowering nut trees. Their present existence indicates that they were used since 7000 B. C. the first country to cultivate them was California around 1930s.

California pistachios, also known as Kerman variety was perfected after ten years of study. Currently, California produces over 400 million pounds of it annually. Therefore, it is the largest producer worldwide. In China, they are called 'happy nuts' since they seem as they are smiling.

It is often presented as a gift in Chinese New Year. They symbolize quality health, happiness and good luck. China consumes a lot of pistachios than any other country in the world. Therefore, it is the largest consumer with approximately 120 million pounds annually. Israel has seven million people that snack hence it uses nine million pounds per year. Thus, Israel is the largest consumer per capita.

In India, the nuts are one of the main foods. They are used in the famous saffron pistachio drink. Pistachios are also called 'hot food'. This is because

its consumers believe that they make the body warm. Therefore, it is commonly used during the winter season. On the other hand, in Russia the nuts are consumed as an accompaniment of beer during summer. In France, pistachios are used during an event called aperitif. It serves as an appetizer when it is eaten with a light drink.

The tree was initially grown in Western Asia after Iran where it was an essential in some parts of Iran (Painter et al 5). Later, some of the Mediterranean regions adopted it. It is only recently that Australia, California and the New Mexico cultivated the crop. The tree does well in arid areas since it uses extremely saline soils. However, it does well when it is irrigated with salty water. It is hardy to its precise conditions. Moreover, it can grow under extreme conditions in winter and summer.

Pistachios require well drained soil and a sunny position. It can not do well under circumstances of high moisture and are prone to root rot during winter due to a lot of water and inadequate soil drainage. The fruits ripen well during long hot summers. The pistachio trees are highly protected especially in Kyrgyzstan. Here, there is a forest Reserve known as Jilygyndy.

The pistachio trees have a maximum height of ten meters with deciduous leaves of about 10-20 centimeters. These are also deciduous trees that are categorized into both male and female trees. They also have unisexual, apetalous flowers that are also borne in panicles. In addition, the tree has a lengthened drupe fruit. The fruit is the edible part of the tree. The nut is culinary and when ripe, it bursts with a loud sound. It also turns from green to yellow, when it is ripe. It is estimated that a pistachio tree bears an

average of 50kgs of seeds every years. These trees are mostly grown in Tunisia, morocco, Cyprus, Mauritius, Madagascar, United States, China, Italy, Uzbekistan, Iran, Pakistan, Syria and Mexico.

The nuts have a lot of advantages in relation to other nuts. They have several health benefits because of their valuable contents. For instance, the nuts contain many vitamins, minerals like potassium, magnesium, phosphorus, copper, and zinc among others. All these components are indispensable in the human body. They are necessary for the protection of the human system against certain diseases.

The nuts help in the prevention of cardiovascular diseases that are fatal to the human health. They also aid in preventing hypertension and certain cancers. Pistachios also act like anti oxidants and reduce the amount of cholesterol in the body. Therefore, they minimize the cases of obesity in human beings (Aldemir et al 3). They are also a good generator source of energy in the body, hence enhancing the body functions.

Moreover, pistachios have oil that is essential in the skin. This oil is has a lot of flavor and nutty smell. It also has great ointment properties that moisturize the human skin. More so, the nuts are useful in cooking. Their oil is used as base oil or a carrier in ancient drugs in massage therapy. It was also used in cosmetics and aromatherapy.

Pistachios are the perfect food in that given that its consumption is highly beneficial. There are so many benefits of the food as discussed below. First, pistachios are consumed as food in many countries. The fruit has certain nutritional value that is essential for the control of nutrition-related diseases

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(Kazemi et al 29). They are highly nutritious given that they have eight nutrients. These include fiber, phosphorous, thiamin, vitamin B6, copper, magnesium, and manganese.

Consumption of pistachio is essential in reducing the heart complications.

This is because it contains low -glycemic index and are no cholesterol.

Therefore, due to low fat content, it becomes the most suitable and healthy food for a human heart. The available fat is also suitable. In addition, it has antioxidants hence reducing the fat content in the human body.

Consequently, it reduces the risk of developing a heart disease (Painter et al 7). In fact it is more effective than a cup of tea. It also helps in reducing the blood cholesterol.

Furthermore, the nut has fiber and has a lot of phytosterols. These contents play a significant role in maintaining the human health. They are both capable of reducing the cholesterol from the diet. Moreover, it has potassium that helps to prevent high-blood pressure which might lead to stroke or cardiovascular disease.

It has been established that a handful of the pistachios are likely to minimize the cholesterol level and provide antioxidants that are contained in brightly colored fruit and green vegetables. Therefore, the cardiovascular complications are minimized.

Pistachios also reduce serum oxidized Low Density Lipoprotein (LDL) and boosts the levels of the antioxidants. In relation to other nuts, pistachios have a high amount of beta-carotene, gamma-tocopherol and lutein. A study by the Pennsylvania State University to assess the impact of pistachios on

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the serum antioxidants and the serum oxidized LDL among 28 hypercholesterolemic adults. In the research, the subjects were given 3 isoenergetic foods for a month each after a fortnight baseline run-in-diet. In step 1, the diets include had no pistachios and those with 1.5 oz/d pistachios and those of 3.0 oz/d pistachios.

The ones with 1.5oz/d and 3.0 oz/d were found to reduce the oxidized LDL from baseline in relation to step 1 diet. Moreover, the diets containing the pistachios proved to increase the amount of lutein relative to baseline. The 3.0 oz/d led to a rise in beta-carotene and gamma-tocopherol compared to step 1 diet. In the analysis, it was clear that the boost in lutein levels were interconnected with the decline of oxidized LDL. Each After the research, it was established that the fruit reduces the amount of the oxidized LDL and raises the level of antioxidants.

Pistachios also lower the lipids and lipoprotein which can cause heart disease. This is because they are high in beta-carotene, gamma tocopherol and lutein. The lutein, which is mainly found in dark green vegetables, is essential to improving vision and the skin. These three constituents are oil soluble vitamins (Aldemir et al 5).

Additionally, it is known that pistachios help in the reduction of acute stress. The research done at the Penn State in ten years depicted that higher cardiovascular reactions to stress poses a risk of developing high-blood pressure in life. In the study, the investigators used an intersect control research plan with all the three diets containing equal amounts of calories. The study run for four weeks during which the subjects only fed on the food

provided by the researchers; the food had 35% fat and 11% saturated fats. Subsequently, the research demonstrates that there is a likelihood of the pistachios to reduce the stress responses in an individual. Thus, pistachio is perfect food.

Another benefit of pistachios is that its usage is likely to reduce lung cancer and other cancers. This is in line with a study done by the American Association for Cancer Research Frontiers, in a Cancer. According to the researchers, vitamin protects one against some forms of cancer. Thus, they recommended an adequate intake of gamma-topherical; a form of vitamin E among the people. They also explained that the consumption of the element reduces the risks of lung cancer. Therefore, pistachios are prefect food since they have gamma-topheral. They are also known to prevent prostate cancer. There are other nuts that also contain the gamma-topheral element including pecans, walnuts, soybeans, peanuts, and corn oils (Painter et al 8).

Another research was undertaken by James M. D., of George Mason University and Michael J. Sheridan, Sc. D., of Inova Fairfax Hospital. In it, he discovered that high-cholesterol levels could be cut down by using about two to three ounces of kernels. This was confirmed to minimize the levels of the blood lipid. The research also confirmed that using pistachios on a daily basis protects one's heart health by and maintains without any dietary alterations.

Moreover, pistachios are the perfect food because it helps in minimizing obesity among people. This is because it contains unsaturated fats and has low glycemic index. Obesity is dangerous given that it could lead to stroke, high blood pressure or heart attack. Therefore, daily use of pistachios

reduces the risk of these complications since its consumers maintain a normal body mass.

In addition, pistachios are known to regulate the absorption of glucose. Therefore, they help in lowering the blood sugar level in a human body. High-sugar levels in a human body are unhealthy as they make one susceptible to obesity and other heart diseases. Thus pistachios' regular consumption helps check the sugar level hence preventing hypertension.

Moreover, pistachios are hugely significant in the growth and development of children. This is because they contain vitamins and minerals that are essential for a proper growth and development of children. Subsequently, they are highly recommended for the physical and mental development of children. The nut also has about 70% of its fatty acids as monounsaturated fatty acids. These in turn are necessary for the human body as it has a lot of advantages.

Apart from preventing cardiovascular complications, pistachios are notable in the prevention of old-age blindness. This is due to the sufficient amount of the antioxidant lutein. In fact, its lutein content is about thirteen times the level compared to the hazelnuts. The component (lutein) is useful in minimizing the chances of developing the age-related macular deterioration which causes permanent blindness. Macular deterioration is the collapse of the main part of the retina and the chief cause of blindness among people over the age of 65 years.

Additionally, pistachios are regarded as a perfect snack by many of their consumers because of their saturated fat and lack of cholesterol. It also

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contains certain vitamins including vitamin A that is essential in the prevention of night blindness among people. This component also stimulates development of body cells and tissues (Kazemi et al 30).

Another component found in pistachios is vitamin B-1; thiamin. This is instrumental in the cells' production of energy from the carbohydrates. The body, in turn uses the energy in its operations to ensure that everything is in order in the human system. Therefore, pistachios are beneficial to the human health.

Vitamin B-6 is another crucial constituent of pistachios. This makes it vital to the human health because vitamin B-6 helps the body produce proteins required in cell formation. In addition, this constituent enables the body generate vital chemicals such as antibodies, hemoglobin and insulin that help the body fight contagions (Painter et al 10).

Also, pistachios have calcium that is necessary in the human body. Calcium not only makes the teeth and bones strong but also enables the heart and the muscles contract. More so, the constituent holds the usual nerve operations. Hence, pistachios are the perfect food to all people.

Another nutritious component of pistachios is copper. Copper is required in the normal body functions. This is because it is used to generate hemoglobin, without which, the body cannot operate well. Hemoglobin helps the body carry oxygen in the blood. Additionally, copper enables the body produce energy in the body.

Besides, pistachio contains Vitamin E that enhances healthy cells and tissues in the human body. This component is also an antioxidant hence it helps the body decline the chances of cardiovascular diseases and certain cancers (Kay et al 68). Anyone wishing to maintain a strong health should regularly take pistachios.

Another benefit of the pistachios is that it contains magnesium, a mineral that is highly indispensable in the human body. It is necessary for the formation of healthy bones. It also forms a crucial part of more than thirty enzymes that are responsible for the regulation of numerous body functions. For instance, muscle contractions are enhanced by magnesium.

In addition, pistachios are the perfect food because they have phosphorous. This is a mineral that enables the human body produce new cells. It also helps it utilize carbohydrates, proteins and fats efficiently. Therefore, it maintains the body health by ensuring that everything is in order.

Furthermore, these nuts have potassium. This is a mineral that crucial in that it balances electrolytes and body fluids. Moreover, potassium is essential in the muscle contractions and nerve impulses. It also helps the body advance its stamina during exercises.

Pistachios also have selenium, a mineral that facilitates the development of the body cells. It also functions like an antioxidant with vitamin E in order to prevent damage of the body cells (Kazemi et al 29). Damage of the body cells can cause cardiovascular diseases and cancer. Zinc is also an valuable constituent of the pistachios. It helps in the growth and development as well

as promoting cell regeneration and tissue development. This is paramount in wound repair and healing process.

Moreover, pistachios are the perfect food because they are truly delicious. Its crunch is also immensely satisfying and has a complete nutritional value. Therefore it is celebrated as one of the best existing nuts in the world (Kay et al 74). Additionally, the nutrition specialists have branded it a ‘skinny nut’ because of its low amount of fat. They also produce many nuts per portion; it produces about 49 kernels per ounce relative to 18 cashew nuts, 14 walnut and 23 almonds. Thus, it is economical in that a handful of it (about 30 kernels) gives a delicious 100 calorie snack.

These nutritionists also refer to it as a ‘Mindful’ snack. This is due to its nature of packaging. It is kept in a shell; therefore they take a longer time to eat. This helps to slow down the rate of consumption and hence minimizing the calorie intake by 41%. This is according to the recent research submitted to the American Dietetic Association’s national conference.

Besides, another research conducted by the Italian researchers establishes that pistachios have a number of antioxidants that are highly useful in the human system. It also contains the phytonutrients that are mostly found in the catechins, vegetables, red wine, fruits and soy foods. Therefore, the investigators resolved that pistachios are the greatest origins of the antioxidants plant-based foods.

Pistachios are also beneficial in that it can reduce the amount aflatoxins that are produced by the *Flavus*. In a study carried out in California, in pistachio

orchard, the researchers established out that spraying the trees with the yeast subdued the incidence

Hua has received a copyright for utilization of the yeast as an economical way to guard tree nuts, as well as corn, from becoming infected with aflatoxin. Standards set by the U. S. Food and Drug Administration help prevent the sale of aflatoxin-contaminated food and feed (Bensassi et al 46).

In the studies done in a California pistachio orchard, Hua and friends discovered that spraying the trees with the yeast inhibited incidence of *A. flavus* in pistachios by up to 97 percent, compared to unsprayed trees. The yeast can also be sprayed on the harvested or stored crop instead of on trees before the harvest, according to Hua, based at the ARS Western Regional Research Center in Albany, Calif.

Besides inhibiting the *A. flavus* fungus, the versatile yeast may also be effective in protecting other crops against any of at least half a dozen other species of microbes that can ruin a food's taste, texture, yield, safety or other attributes. Those microbes include, for example, *Botrytis cinerea*, which causes gray mold of table grapes (Bensassi et al 48).

ARS is the major intramural scientific study body of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Hua's research is one of many studies conducted at ARS labs nationwide to support the USDA priority of food safety. Therefore, pistachios are excellent food.

Evidently, it is clear that pistachios are indispensable. In fact they are highly recommended as the best nut worldwide. It aids in boosting human health.

Its consumers have minimal chances of developing cancers, cardiovascular diseases and hypertension. The nuts also have antioxidants and are capable of reducing the amount of cholesterol in the body. The oil is applied on the skin to keep the body moist and, in cooking as baseline. They can also act as appetizers in some parts of the world. Pistachios are also useful in agricultural activities like prevention of aflatoxin in food crops. Therefore, they ensure safety in food consumption. A lot of research has been done to prove that they are valuable. Thus, pistachios are the best nuts in the world compared to other nuts. Everyone should use in order to maintain a strong health.