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NEW RESEARCH REINFORCES PISTACHIOS ARE A HEART-SMART SNACK

Penn State University Study Highlights Benefits of Phytosterols Found in Popular Snack Nut

FRESNO, Calif. (February 28, 2011) – Newly released research from Penn State University highlights phytosterols, found in pistachios, may improve cholesterol, a factor in cardiovascular health.

“We already know that pistachios are a naturally cholesterol-free food, but this new study suggests that phytosterols, or plant sterols, in pistachios may help to reduce the absorption of cholesterol,” said Constance Geiger, PhD, RD, CD and nutrition expert for the Western Pistachio Association. “Lowering cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease, so these findings give people even more reasons to snack on delicious pistachios.”

Plant sterols, naturally found in many fruits, vegetables and nuts, have been long studied for their cholesterol-lowering properties. These chemical compounds help lower total cholesterol levels by blocking the amount of cholesterol absorbed in the body.

Geiger offers three easy ways to eat pistachios for improved heart health:

- **In the car:** toss a bag of pistachios in the glove box for an easily accessible go-to food option when out running errands. Having a nutritious option within arm’s reach will help you avoid drive-thru binges.
- **At home:** fill a bowl with pistachios and set it out in the kitchen next to an empty bowl for shells for a healthier snack option.
- **After the gym:** pistachios may help lower blood cholesterol levels, and they also offer fiber, which satisfies hunger. Munch on pistachios on your way to or from the gym. They offer more than 20 important nutrients to keep you powered up for the day.

Pistachio Facts

Pistachios are a naturally cholesterol-free snack that contains just 1.5 grams of saturated fat and 13 grams of fat, the majority of which comes from monounsaturated fat. A one-ounce serving of pistachios equals 49 nuts, which is more nuts per serving than any other snack nut. One serving of pistachios has as much potassium (300mg, 8 percent) as an orange (250mg, 7 percent), making it a nutritious snack choice or ingredient to incorporate into daily diets.

Research Details

The research abstract referenced in this press release is titled, “Dose-related effects of pistachios on plasma sterol concentrations in moderately hypercholesterolemic individuals” and co-authored by Holligan, S, Gebauer, SK, West, SG, Kay, CD, Kris-Etherton PM from the Department of Nutritional Sciences, Department of Biobehavioral Health, The Pennsylvania State University (University Park, PA, 16802), Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center, Agricultural Research Service, USDA (Beltsville, MD, 20705) and School of Medicine, University of East Anglia (Norwich, NR4 7TJ, UK).

About the Western Pistachio Association

Western Pistachio Association is a non-profit voluntary trade association representing more than 400 growers in the United States. WPA is governed by an 18-member board of directors and is funded entirely by growers and independent processors with the shared goal of increasing global awareness of nutritious, American-grown pistachios.

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