

Coffee & Peanut Butter Diet

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Overview

Can a diet consisting of your favorite childhood treat and your beloved adult vice actually be good for you? A 2002 study by researcher Rui Jiang and colleagues from the Harvard School of Public Health, published in the "Journal of the American Medical Association," claims that women who eat one serving of peanut butter two or more times a week gain less weight than women who rarely indulge in the gooey delicacy.

Furthermore, Dr. Mehmet Oz describes coffee as "a powerful antioxidant that appears to help stave off cognitive dementia."

Features

Doctors and nutritionists agree that peanut butter is a great diet option for two reasons. First, it is high in monounsaturated fats, similar to that in olive oil, and consists of many essential nutrients. Second, according to Richard Mattes, Ph.D., R.D., a nutrition professor at Purdue University, it helps you stay full for up to two hours, which keeps you from snacking throughout the day. Coffee, as a natural appetite suppressant, also helps decrease your cravings. Plus, it speeds up your metabolism and gives you a quick energy boost.

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Benefits

Consuming both peanut butter and coffee could give you a number of benefits, including lower risk for type 2 diabetes, Parkinson's disease, coronary heart disease, liver disease and colon disease. As Dr. Mattes tells CNN.com, "Eating peanut butter or peanuts has been associated with lower total cholesterol, lower LDL or 'bad' cholesterol, and lower triglycerides, all of which are associated with lower cardiovascular risk."

As for coffee, according to CNN.com, a 2008 study found that women who drink up to six cups a day are less likely to die of various causes during the study than those who abstained from a regular cup of Joe. Plus, the American Heart Association conference reports that people who drink four or more cups a day are 18 percent less likely to be admitted to the hospital than their non-java-drinking counterparts. Furthermore, Joe A. Vinson, Ph.D., chemistry professor at the University of Scranton, claims that coffee is the number one source of antioxidants in the United States diet.

Considerations

Before you get too carried away with this diet, be sure to consider the type of coffee and peanut butter you are consuming. If you add sugar to your coffee, you're taking in a lot of additional empty calories. Furthermore, if you are too heavy on the cream, you could be consuming too much fat. In regards to peanut butter, look at the label. Natural peanut butter options are the best. You want something with as little salt, sugar and oil as possible.

Warning

Although peanut butter and coffee both have many great benefits, be sure not to over-do your consumption of them or to neglect including other vital nutrients in your diet. Because peanut butter is so high in calories, Nutritionists recommend eating no more than 6 tbsp. of it per day. In addition, too much coffee can have the reverse effect on some people, creating a crashing sensation. As a result, several experts suggest limiting your coffee intake to two cups daily.

Expert Insight

Overall, if you're looking for a quality snack, peanut butter is the choice of champions. Sharon Richter is a registered dietitian and regular consultant on television programs such as "The Today Show" and "CNN," and she also contributes to a significant number of publications, including "Shape," "Fitness," "Runner's World" and "The New York Post." Richter recently interviewed pro golfers for "Golf Magazine" to rate their favorite snacks. Leading golfer Tiger Woods chose peanut butter. Richter's response? "Peanut butter is fantastic," she explained. "It has the good, monounsaturated fat, plus protein for energy."