



## GEORGIA PECAN COMMISSION

### Pecan Nutrition Fact Sheet

Delicious, rich-tasting pecans have so many health benefits that they are referred to as “nutrition in a nutshell.” The nuts are enriched with many health-benefiting nutrients, minerals, vitamins that are essential for optimum health.

- › A 30-year study by Harvard University found that regular nut eaters were less likely to die of cancer, heart disease or any other health-related cause. Researchers tracked 119,000 men and women and found that the risk of dying from heart disease dropped 29 percent and the risk of dying of cancer fell 11 percent among those who had nuts seven or more times a week compared with people who never ate them.
- › Pecans contain more than 19 vitamins and minerals – including vitamin A, vitamin E, folic acid, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium and zinc.
- › The nuts are very rich sources of several important B-complex groups of vitamins such as riboflavin, niacin, thiamin, pantothenic acid and vitamin B-6. Together, these vitamins work as co-factors for the enzyme metabolism inside the human body.
- › With little saturated fat and no trans-fat, pecans are heart-healthy. Nearly 60 percent of the fats in pecans are monounsaturated, and another 30 percent are polyunsaturated. The unsaturated fat in pecans meets new U.S. Food and Drug Administration Dietary Guidelines that recommend Americans keep intake between 20 and 35 percent of calories, with most fats coming from heart-healthy sources like fish, nuts and vegetable oils.
- › The nuts are rich in monounsaturated fatty acids like oleic acid and an excellent source of phenolic antioxidants. Regular addition of pecan nuts in the diet helps to decrease total as well as LDL or “bad cholesterol” and increases HDL or “good cholesterol” levels in the blood.
- › Pecans are recognized as heart healthy by the American Heart Association. Pecan nuts are rich source of many phyto-chemical substances that may contribute to their overall antioxidant activity, including polyphenolic antioxidant ellagic acid, vitamin E, beta-carotene, lutein and zeaxanthin. According to the American Cancer Society, antioxidants are chemicals that block the activity of other chemicals known as free radicals, which can damage cells. Free radicals also may play a role in heart disease, cancer and other diseases. Research studies suggest that antioxidants like those in pecans help the body remove toxic oxygen-free radicals and thus, protect the body from diseases, cancers, as well as infections. Ellagic acid, for example, has the ability to inhibit DNA binding of certain carcinogens such as nitrosamines and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, thus protecting the human body from cancers.
- › Pecans are an excellent source of vitamin-E and especially rich in gamma-tocopherol, providing about 25 g per 100 g. Vitamin E is a powerful lipid soluble antioxidant, required for maintaining the integrity of cell membrane of mucus membranes and skin by protecting it from harmful oxygen-free radicals.
- › The nuts are also rich source of minerals including manganese, potassium, calcium, iron, magnesium, zinc and selenium.

- › Studies suggest that a diet high in antioxidants from fruits, nuts and vegetables is associated with a lower risk of cancer, cardiovascular disease, Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease.
- › One ounce of pecans provides 10 percent of the Recommended Daily Value (RDV) for fiber.
- › Pecans are also a natural, high-quality source of protein with very few carbohydrates and no cholesterol.
- › People with gluten intolerance, a very serious health concern, can enjoy naturally gluten-free pecans. Pecans and pecan meal can be used in recipes for gluten-free diets.
- › Pecans may help with weight control. When combined with a healthy diet, nuts may help increase metabolism and enhance satiety, making dieters feel full.

To learn more about pecans or about Georgia Agricultural Commodity Commission for Pecans (Georgia Pecan Commission), go to [www.americasnut.com](http://www.americasnut.com).

*—From the Georgia Agricultural Commodity Commission for Pecans (Georgia Pecan Commission)*