

Study finds adding almonds to energy-restricted diet can help people lose weight, improve cardiometabolic health

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In an energy restricted diet almonds helped people to lose weight, and improved their cardiometabolic health. Credit: Almonds by HealthAliciousNess is licensed under CC BY 2.0.

When it comes to weight loss, nuts can get a bad rap—while they're high in protein, they're also high in fats, and this often deters those looking to shed a few kilos. But [new research](#) from the University of South Australia shows that you can eat almonds and lose weight too. The research is published in the journal *Obesity*.

In the largest study of its kind, researchers found that including almonds in an energy-restricted diet not only helped people to lose weight, but also improved their cardiometabolic health.

Examining the effects of energy-restricted diets supplemented with Californian almonds or with carbohydrate-rich snacks, researchers found that both diets successfully reduced body weight by about 7kg.

Globally, more than 1.9 billion adults are overweight (650 million with obesity). In Australia, two in three people (approximately 12.5 million adults) are overweight or have obesity.

UniSA researcher Dr. Sharayah Carter says the study demonstrates how nuts can support a [healthy diet](#) for weight management and cardiometabolic health.

"Nuts, like almonds, are a great snack. They're high in protein, fiber, and packed with vitamins and minerals, but they also have a [high fat content](#) which people can associate with increased body weight," Dr. Carter says.

"Nuts contain [unsaturated fats](#)—or [healthy fats](#)—which can improve blood cholesterol levels, ease inflammation, and contribute to a healthy heart.

"In this study we examined the effects of an almond-supplemented diet with a nut-free diet to identify any influence on weight and cardiometabolic outcomes.

"Both the nut and nut free diets resulted in approximately 9.3% reduction in [body weight](#) over the trial.

"Yet the almond-supplemented diets also demonstrated statistically significant changes in some highly atherogenic lipoprotein subfractions, which may lead to improved cardiometabolic health in the longer term.

"Additionally, nuts have the added benefit of making you feel fuller for longer, which is always a pro when you're trying to manage your weight."

The study saw 106 participants complete a nine-month eating program (a three-month energy-restricted diet for weight loss, followed by a six-month energy-controlled diet for weight maintenance). In both phases, 15% of participants' energy intake comprised unsalted whole almonds with skins (for the nut diet) or 15% carbohydrate-rich snacks -- such as rice crackers or baked cereal bars (for the nut-free diet).

These findings provide further evidence that dietitians and nutritionists can recommend [almonds](#) as part of a balanced [weight loss diet](#).

More information: Sharayah Carter et al, Almonds vs. carbohydrate snacks in an energy-restricted diet: Weight and cardiometabolic outcomes from a randomized trial, *Obesity* (2023). [DOI: 10.1002/oby.23860](#)

Provided by University of South Australia

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