



# Get to the Heart of Snacking with Pecans

It should be of no surprise that snacks have the potential to contribute to a heart healthy diet. When you choose pecans as a snack, you get the health benefits you're looking for in a surprisingly snackable serving size. Just a handful of pecans (about 19 halves) has fiber, antioxidants (particularly gamma tocopheril, a unique form of vitamin E), and good unsaturated fats - a one-ounce serving of pecans contains 18g of unsaturated fat and only 2g of saturated fat. **Plus - pecans are a heart-healthy food certified by the American Heart Association's Heart-Check Program!\***



\*Only foods that meet specific nutrition requirements for sodium, fats, and beneficial nutrients can receive the Heart-Check Certification.

1 serving of pecans = 19 halves 



## TIP #1

### Choose unsaturated fats when possible

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend limiting intake of saturated fats and replacing them with unsaturated fats, particularly polyunsaturated fats.<sup>1</sup> Good news is – pecans have good mono and polyunsaturated fats!\*\* Scientific evidence suggests but does not prove that eating 1.5 ounces per day of most nuts, such as pecans, as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease.

\*\* A one-ounce serving of pecans contains 18g unsaturated fat and only 2g saturated fat.



## TIP #2

### Choose snacks that keep you feeling full.

Overweight and obesity raises the risk for high blood pressure, a significant risk factor for heart disease.<sup>6</sup> A growing body of evidence indicates that higher consumption of nuts, including pecans, may be beneficial for weight management and long-term weight maintenance.<sup>7</sup> This is likely related to the unique nutritional composition of nuts that keep us feeling full.



## TIP #3

### Keep salt and sugar low

The American Heart Association recommends limiting added sugars to no more than 100 calories a day (6 teaspoons) for most women and no more than 150 calories a day (9 teaspoons) for most men, and consuming no more than 2,300 mg of sodium a day.<sup>7,8</sup> Did you know - one ounce (about 19 halves) of plain pecans contains 0 grams of added sugar and no sodium?<sup>9</sup> Enjoy unsalted or lightly seasoned pecans for a low sodium, low sugar snack.

# American Heart Association Heart-Check Certified Recipes



## Roasted Red Pepper Pecan Dip

By: The American Pecan Promotion Board

Serving Size: 32

Cook Time: 5 mins

A simple quick make-ahead appetizer that's both nutritious and flavorful. Serve it with crackers or spread it on top of toasted bread slices with additional toasted pecans for an easy appetizer.

### Ingredients:

1 cup toasted pecan pieces*	1 clove garlic, roughly chopped
1/2 cup reduced fat crumbled Feta cheese	1/4 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1/2 cup roasted red pepper (about 1 whole jarred pepper)	1/4 teaspoon smoked paprika
	Salt and pepper, to taste

### Process:

1. Add the pecans to the bowl of a food processor. Pulse a few times to break up the pecans. Add the remaining ingredients and pulse until the mixture is smooth. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
2. Transfer to an airtight container and store in the refrigerator until ready to serve. The mixture will stay fresh for up to 5 days.

### Nutrition Facts per serving:

Calories: 30 | Fat: 3g | Saturated Fat: 0.5g | Sodium: 50mg | Carbs: 1g  
Fiber: 0g | Protein: 1g

### Citations

1. U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025. 9th Edition. December 2020. Available at [DietaryGuidelines.gov](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov). 2. American Heart Association. (2023, October 25). Monounsaturated Fats. [www.heart.org. https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/fats/monounsaturated-fats](https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/fats/monounsaturated-fats) 3. American Heart Association. (2023, October 25). Polyunsaturated fats. [www.heart.org. https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/fats/polyunsaturated-fats](https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/fats/polyunsaturated-fats) 4. McRae MP. Dietary Fiber Is Beneficial for the Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease: An Umbrella Review of Meta-analyses. *J Chiropr Med.* 2017 Dec;16(4):289-299. doi: 10.1016/j.jcm.2017.05.005. Epub 2017 Oct 25. PMID: 29276461; PMCID: PMC5731843. 5. Kris-Etherton PM, Lichtenstein AH, Howard BV, Steinberg D, Witztum JL; Nutrition Committee of the American Heart Association Council on Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Metabolism. Antioxidant vitamin supplements and cardiovascular disease. *Circulation.* 2004 Aug 3;110(5):637-41. doi: 10.1161/01.CIR.0000137822.39831.F1. PMID: 15289389. 6. American Heart Association. (2024, January 31). *Lose Weight and Lower Heart Disease Risk.* [www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/go-red-get-fit/lose-weight-lower-heart-disease-risk](https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/go-red-get-fit/lose-weight-lower-heart-disease-risk) 7. Baer DJ, Dalton M, Blundell J, Finlayson G, Hu FB. Nuts, Energy Balance and Body Weight. *Nutrients.* 2023 Feb 25;15(5):1162. doi: 10.3390/nu15051162. PMID: 36904160; PMCID: PMC10004756. 8. American Heart Association (2024, August 2). *Added Sugars.* [www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/sugar/added-sugars](https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/sugar/added-sugars) 9. American Heart Association (2024, January 5). How much sodium should I eat per day? [www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/sodium/how-much-sodium-should-i-eat-per-day](https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/sodium/how-much-sodium-should-i-eat-per-day) 10. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center. FoodData Central. [fdc.nal.usda.gov](https://fdc.nal.usda.gov)



## Cherry Pecan Energy Bites

By: The American Pecan Promotion Board

Serving Size: 12

Cook Time: 10 mins

With just a few simple ingredients, whip up these cherry pecan energy bites in under 10 minutes for a nutritious, power-packed snack! Chock-full of pecans, cherries and oats – they're deliciously packed with nutrients.

### Ingredients:

1 cup toasted pecan pieces	1 tablespoon cacao powder, plus more for coating
1 cup dried cherries	1 teaspoon vanilla extract
4 medjool dates, pitted	
1/4 cup old-fashioned oats	

### Process:

1. Add all of the ingredients to the bowl of a food processor.
2. Pulse until the ingredients begin to bind and form a loose dough-like ball.
3. Roll into 1-inch balls. Roll the balls in cacao powder (optional) and transfer to an airtight container. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Makes 10 to 12 energy bites. Bites will stay for up to 5 days.

### Nutrition Facts per serving:

Calories: 160 | Fat: 8g | Saturated Fat: 1g | Sodium: 0mg | Carbs: 21g  
Fiber: 3g | Protein: 2g