



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Nuts, Nuts, and More Nuts**

Planning to set out a bowl or two of nuts during the holidays. Are you making a healthy choice or should you reconsider? First, what's in a nut? The answer: protein, fiber, some vitamins and minerals in varying amounts. There is also fat but the good news is it is mostly unsaturated (the more heart healthy fat) and nuts contain no cholesterol. If we buy the unsalted nuts, they are also low in sodium. We do need to remember nuts are high in fat and are therefore high in calories. But, as part of an overall daily diet that is rich in whole grains, fruits, and vegetables, nuts in moderation can be a great choice for a snack or to add interest to some of your favorite dishes.

Some tips:

- When you buy nuts in the shell, look for those that are clean and free from scars, cracks, or holes. Nuts in the shell should be heavy for their size, indicating a fresh, meaty kernel. Nutmeats that rattle in their shells are usually stale.
- Crisp, plump and meaty nutmeats indicate high quality; limp, rubbery or shriveled nutmeats indicate poor quality.
- When you buy cracked nuts in the shell in plastic bags, remove the cracked nuts from the plastic bags immediately and spread them out on trays in an airy location until you can shell and store them properly. If left in the plastic bag, nuts may become moldy. **VERY IMPORTANT--DISCARD ANY NUTS SHOWING MOLD GROWTH.**
- Unshelled nuts with no cracks that have been dried properly will keep at room temperature for several weeks.
- All nuts are rather fatty, and it's this fat that turns rancid and spoils the nutmeats. Even unshelled nuts can spoil after awhile. To prevent this, store unshelled nuts in airtight containers in a cool, dry, dark location, below 70<sup>0</sup> F. If stored properly, nuts should keep for about 4 months. For longer storage, put unshelled or shelled nuts in a moisture/vapor proof containers and store in refrigerator or freezer—the lower the storage temperature, the longer the shelf life.
- Bugs in your nuts!!! Store in the freezer at 0<sup>0</sup> F. for 2 to 60 days. Heating is not recommended since it causes nuts to turn rancid faster.

For additional information on how to buy, use, and preserve nuts, contact your local Cooperative Extension Family and Consumer Science Advisor at (209) 468-2085.

Adapted from University of California Cooperative Extension's *Preserving Nut*, 1984 and University of Missouri Outreach and Extension's *From Harvest to Health: Nuts*, <http://outreach.missouri.edu/hes/fn/harvesttohealth/nuts.htm>

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