

Living on WELL Street Blog: “Go Nuts!”

By Michael White, Worksite Wellness Technical Assistant, We Choose Health

**“It is easier to change a man’s religion than to change his diet.”** – Margaret Mead, American Cultural Anthropologist

Dan Buettner’s fascinating book, *The Blue Zones* (<http://www.bluezones.com>) identifies four areas in the world where people live exceptionally healthy and long lives. One of those areas is a Seventh-day Adventists community in southern California. In studying that population, the following five-lifestyle behaviors combined to add as many as 10 years to a normal life span:

1. Eat a vegetarian diet
2. Eat nuts
3. Don’t smoke
4. Be physically active
5. Maintain a normal body weight

Eating nuts was found to add an additional two years of longevity, primarily due to its heart health benefits. To date, at least four major studies have shown that eating nuts positively impacts health and longevity.

Nut snacks should “replace” other types of snacks and **not** be an addition to a person’s normal food intake – especially important for people concerned about weight management. The healthiest nuts include: almonds, hazelnuts, peanuts (technically not a nut, rather a “legume”), pecans, some pine nuts, pistachios, and walnuts. Nuts with higher saturated fat content, but still a healthy snack alternative in single serving sizes, include: brazil nuts, cashews and macadamia nuts.

A one-ounce serving of nuts is considered a standard serving size. This represents 10-30 grams and typically between 150-200 calories. Examples of the actual number of nuts in a single serving are: 22 to 24-shelled almonds, 7-brazil nuts, 16 to 18-cashews, 20-hazel nuts, 12-macadamia nuts, 28-peanuts, 20-pecan halves, 45 to 47-pistachios and 14-shelled walnut halves. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recommends 1½ ounces, or 1/3 cup of nuts a day. A note of caution: the health benefits of nuts can be significantly reduced when the nuts are covered with chocolate, sugar, or salt. Keeping a 1 to 2 ounce tin, cup, or container at your workstation can be a helpful tool to remind you to eat a daily serving of your favorite nuts.

**GO NUTS!** is a worksite health promotion activity that encourages people to enjoy nutritious nuts as a daily snack. A complete description of the activity can be found on the We Choose Health 365 website at:

<http://wechoosehealth365.com/asp/public/Page.aspx?pid=15548> .

Go Nuts!

Michael