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Get that New Year resolution nutted out with Australian almonds

The New Year always brings the incentive to get our healthy lifestyle and diet back on track, which often turns into a difficult challenge with mixed results. Australian almonds, which have received the tick of approval by the National Heart Foundation, can be part of the solution to get that nutty resolution under control.

Sara Grafenaeur, Accredited Practicing Dietician, said almonds can help with both heart health and healthy weight management. She completed a research report on the role of almonds in lowering cholesterol which can cause heart disease.

"Almonds have been shown to lower LDL (the 'lousy') cholesterol and thereby reduce the risk of heart disease. It's all to do with the level of monounsaturated fats in almonds - the good fats our bodies need," Sara said.

"Almonds are also a great source of the antioxidant vitamin E, proven to promote cardiovascular health. They are rich in magnesium and potassium, essential for proper blood flow and the maintenance of healthy heart function," she added.

Australian almonds can also make a positive difference to your waistline as they contain dietary fibre and protein, two nutrients known to increase the feeling that you've eaten enough. They also help to satisfy hunger for longer.

Sue Heintze, from www.idealbodiesonline.com, has been helping people lose weight in a healthy and sustainable way for over seven years.

"It's now known that including good fats in our diet actually help our bodies achieve a state of equilibrium. If you are one of the many Australians who need to lose a few kilos, increasing the good fats in your diet to around 30 per cent of your overall calories will actually help you lose weight," said Heintze.

"This is because for our body systems to function optimally, fat is required by our hormones. Healthy hormones promote good health and vitality," she explained.

Heintze recommends people eat at least two serves of good fats, such as the fat found in almonds, every day.

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"For those trying to lose weight, eating a handful of almonds actually helps satiety and ultimately helps clients stick to a nutrition plan, because they don't feel as hungry," said Heintze.

Different ways to go nuts with almonds

- Mix Australian almonds with dried fruit for a tasty and healthy snack
- Sprinkle dry roasted almonds through your next curry, stir fry or salad
- Crushed almonds are delicious over fresh fruit, yoghurt or low fat ice cream
- Mix crushed almonds with breadcrumbs and your favourite herbs to make a crunchy coating for chicken or fish
- Try them on your favourite cereal or in home-made muffins
- Almonds are the deliciously healthy option for that three o'clock nibble.

For more information on Australian almonds, recipe ideas and nutritional tips, visit www.australianalmonds.com.au.

For further information contact:

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The Almond Board of Australia (ABA) is a non profit, membership based organisation representing the interests of Australian almond growers, processors and marketers.

As the Australian almond industry's peak industry body, the ABA facilitates further growth of the industry, seeks to maximise its profitability and ensure its sustainability, by providing a platform for industry members to collectively respond to industry-wide issues, invest in research and marketing, share knowledge and interact with government and other stakeholders.

The Australian Almond Industry currently produces 36,000 tonnes of almonds on an annual basis, with a related farm gate value of $250 million dollars. Production is expected to double by 2015 as new plantings reach full maturity, with a related value of $500 million dollars.

Key almond growing areas are located in Sunraysia (Victoria), the Riverland and Adelaide (South Australia) and the Riverina region (New South Wales).

For more information visit www.australianalmonds.com.au or email: admin@australianalmonds.com.au