



A factsheet for health professionals

Almonds for good health

Almonds are a protein-rich, versatile tree nut packed with vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and phytochemicals beneficial to health.

The Australian Dietary Guidelines recommends 30 grams (a handful) of nuts, including almonds, every day.¹

What your clients and patients need to know

- Almonds contain many beneficial nutrients including healthy unsaturated fats, protein, fibre and calcium.
- Enjoying a handful of almonds regularly as part of a healthy diet may reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease including heart disease and can help with achieving a healthy weight.²
- Almonds are a versatile and portable snack that can be easily incorporated into your diet.

Nutrient content of natural almonds³

Nutrient	Per 30g serve	Per 100g
Energy (kJ)	751	2503
Protein (g)	5.9	19.5
Fat, total (g)	16.4	54.7
Fat, saturated (g)	1.1	3.7
Fat, monounsaturated (g)	10.8	35.9
Fat, polyunsaturated (g)	3.8	12.8
Carbohydrate, total (g)	1.4	4.8
Carbohydrate, sugars (g)	1.4	4.8
Dietary fibre (g)	2.6	8.8
Calcium (mg)	75	250
Copper (mg)	0.3	1.1
Iron (mg)	1.2	3.9
Magnesium (mg)	78	260
Manganese (mg)	0.8	2.5
Molybdenum (µg)	7.4	24.7
Phosphorus (mg)	144	480
Potassium (mg)	222	740
Sodium (mg)	2	5.0
Zinc (mg)	1.1	3.7
Folate (µg)	9	29
Vitamin E (mg)	8.4	28.1
Arginine (g) ⁴	0.8	2.5
Plant sterols (mg) ⁴	59	197
Polyphenols (mg) ⁵	125	418

Almonds: nutrition profile

Healthy fats

Almonds contain healthy unsaturated fats, predominantly monounsaturated fat (66% of total fat), and have a low proportion of saturated fat (7% of total fat).³

Plant protein

Almonds contain around 6g of protein in every 30g handful³, which makes them a good alternative to meat, poultry or fish for vegetarians or vegans. In particular almonds contain the amino acid L-arginine which helps increase the bioavailability of nitric oxide and improve endothelial dysfunction.⁶ Endothelial dysfunction is a central component in the development and progression of atherosclerosis and is associated with greater risk of cardiovascular events.⁷

Calcium

Calcium is important for maintaining healthy teeth and bones and plays a vital role in maintaining the health and functioning of nerve and muscle tissue.⁸ A 30g serve of almonds provides around 75mg, or 7% of your daily calcium needs.^{3,9} This makes almonds an alternative natural source of calcium for those who cannot or choose not to eat dairy.

Plant iron and zinc

Iron is an important mineral involved in various bodily functions, including the transport of oxygen in the blood. This is essential for providing energy for daily life.¹⁰ Similarly, zinc performs essential functions in the body, including the development of immune system cells.¹¹

Almonds contain plant iron and zinc, which are important minerals especially for those following a vegetarian or vegan diet. Vegetarians and vegans are at risk of iron and zinc deficiency if they are not consuming animal meats, fish and/or eggs.¹² Increase the absorption of plant iron from nuts by combining with vitamin C rich foods such as brightly coloured fruit and vegetables.

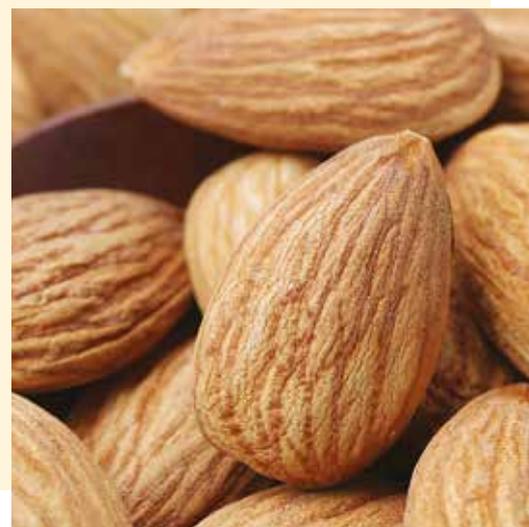
Natural vitamin E

Almonds are high in vitamin E with a 30g serve providing over 70% of the daily requirements for adults.^{3,9} Vitamin E is an important fat-soluble vitamin and antioxidant that can help maintain a healthy heart.

Natural plant sterols

Almonds contain 197mg of plant sterols per 100g.³ Plant sterols can help lower cholesterol levels by reducing cholesterol reabsorption in the intestine.

Almonds are available whole, blanched, slivered, flaked and ground. As well as their health benefits, almonds offer many possibilities for adding texture and taste to meals.



Almonds: health benefits

Protects against cardiovascular disease

Oxidation causes damage to the cells and tissues in the body and is said to potentially contribute to the onset and/or progression of several diseases including diabetes, metabolic disorders and cardiovascular disease.¹³ A study of smokers found that eating 84g of almonds per day for four weeks reduced biomarkers of oxidative stress¹⁴ while another found that eating almonds with a meal reduced oxidative damage.¹⁵ More recent data suggests that regular consumption of monounsaturated rich nuts such as almonds may confer protective antioxidant benefits and possibly decrease oxidative stress.^{16, 17}

Helps with achieving a healthy weight

Although high in unsaturated fat, current research data indicates that nut consumption (including almonds) is not related to body weight increase.^{18, 19, 20} In fact, a systematic review of the literature in 2016 showed that nut consumption (including almonds) can actually help with weight management.² Specifically, consuming almonds was associated with a reduction in overall weight, body mass index and waist circumference.



Almonds are a source of dietary fibre, which is important for a healthy digestive system – a 30g serve provides around 10% of the daily requirements for adults.

Improves blood glucose control

Studies show the potential of almond consumption for improving blood glucose control, particularly as part of a healthy diet. A study in participants with type 2 diabetes that consumed 28g of almonds with breakfast saw positive results on post-prandial glycaemia (post-meal glucose) levels.²¹ In another study, a reduction in fasting blood glucose and fasting insulin was seen in participants with type 2 diabetes that consumed 60g of almonds per day as part of the National Cholesterol Education Program step II diet for four weeks.²² Overall, while these studies are positive, more research is needed to show a consistent effect of almond consumption on blood glucose control.²³

Benefits digestive health

Almonds are a source of dietary fibre, which is important for a healthy digestive system – a 30g serve provides around 10% of the daily requirements for adults.^{3, 9} Research has also shown that almonds may have potential as a prebiotic^{24, 25, 26} – these are non-digestible carbohydrates in a food which stimulate the growth of beneficial bacteria in the gut. Improvements in the intestinal microbiota profile and a modification of intestinal bacterial activity are induced with almond consumption.²⁵

Consuming almonds was associated with a reduction in overall weight, body mass index and waist circumference.



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