

Nut Butter – The Bad, The Good, and How to Make it Better

Nut butter is creamy, delicious, healthy, and versatile. Just one spoonful can fulfill your craving for a sweet and satiating treat that satisfies some of your body's mineral, vitamin, fiber, and healthy fat needs as well. This makes nut butter a win-win dietary solution.

However, nut butter should only be an addition to your diet and not a staple. There are even some types of nut butter that are so unhealthy that eating them is never a good idea. So, which nut butter should you avoid? Let's find out.

The Dirty Truth About Nut Butters

You probably know by now that many commercially produced nut butters (like Skippy peanut butter) contain added sugar and fully-hydrogenated or partially-hydrogenated oils. This combination is lethal. The added sugars feed candida, while the hydrogenated oils dramatically increase your risk of heart disease and diabetes.

Related: *Candida, Gut Flora, Allergies, and Disease*

However, going for the natural peanut butter or almond butter may also cause health issues as well. To figure out which nut butter is best for you, we must explore three of the main health concerns with nut butter.

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Three Health Concerns with Natural Nut Butter

Health Concern #1: They Contain Inflammatory Fats

All nuts (except for macadamia nuts) are high in omega-6 polyunsaturated fatty acids. In small quantities, these fatty acids allow for a healthy inflammatory response, but in higher quantities, these fatty acids promote the pathogenesis of many diseases including cardiovascular disease, cancer, and inflammatory and autoimmune diseases. If you consume vegetable oils, canola oil, soybean oil, and/or heavily processed foods daily, then your body will be in a chronic state of inflammation. The same thing will happen if you consume nuts and nut butter as the majority of your daily calories.

Related: *What Causes Chronic Inflammation, and How To Stop It For Good*

Health Concern #2: Too Much Processing Oxidizes The Fats

Many nut butters (store-bought and homemade) take the inflammatory effects of omega 6 fatty acids one step further.

How?

During processing, the polyunsaturated fats in the nuts are exposed to heat, air, and light. The omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids in the nuts will then begin to oxidize into compounds that are as toxic to the body as partially and fully hydrogenated oils.

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However, this isn't the case for every nut butter. Macadamia nut butter and coconut butter, for example, contain high

amounts of healthy and stable fats that won't oxidize during processing. (Side note: coconuts are technically not nuts, but coconut butter will still be included in the nut butter discussion during this article.)

Health Concern #3: Their Phytic Acid Steals Your Minerals

All nuts, beans, seeds, and beans contain phytic acid.

Phytic acid is the principal storage form of phosphorus in many plant tissues. It contains the mineral phosphorus tightly bound in a snowflake-like molecule.

In humans and animals with one stomach, the phosphorus is not readily bioavailable. In addition to blocking phosphorus availability, the phytic acid molecule readily binds with other minerals (like calcium, magnesium, iron, and zinc), making them unavailable as well.

This means that consuming raw (or close to raw) nuts, seeds, grains, and legumes can cause tooth decay, nutrient deficiencies, lack of appetite, and digestive problems. On top of that, phytic acid also can inhibit some of the enzymes we use to digest protein and carbohydrates, leading to more digestive issues.

Does this mean that you should stop eating nuts and nut butter all together?

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The Practical Truth About Nuts and Nut Butter

Having some omega-6's and phytic acid in your diet will do you no harm as long as foods like nuts and nut butter are eaten in moderation. In fact, small amounts of phytates act as an

antioxidant in your body and help detoxify toxic metals from the gut. However, if you love nuts like me, it is easy to consume too much phytic acid. A handful and a half of raw almonds or 3-4 tablespoons of raw almond butter, for example, has enough phytic acid to drain your energy and cause digestive issues.

The best way to minimize phytic acid consumption is by soaking and sprouting (when possible) your nuts, seeds, grains, and legumes. Soaking and sprouting raw almonds, for example, can vastly decrease their phytic acid content.

The phytic acid content of most phytic acid containing foods can also be reduced by roasting them. (It is best to roast most nuts at temperatures below 320 degrees Fahrenheit to keep their fatty acids from oxidizing.)

To sum it up in one sentence – the phytic acid and omega 6's found in nuts and nut butter will not cause issues as long as they are prepared correctly and eaten in moderation.

The Good News About Nut Butter

Now that the unhealthy aspects of nut butter are out of the way, let's explore what makes it healthy.

Each nut comes with a unique combination of protein, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, fiber, fats, and phytates that give them specific benefits. Walnuts, for example, prevent heart disease and atherosclerosis, while almonds help improve insulin sensitivity in people with prediabetes. All nuts, in general, help people lose weight and decrease cholesterol and inflammation levels.

This is why nuts and nut butter are a healthy part of almost everyone's diet, especially if the negative effects of omega 6s, oxidized fats, and phytic acid are mitigated. However, this doesn't mean that every mindfully made nut butter will be

right for you.

Must Read: *How to Kill Fungal Infections*

What's The Healthiest Nut Butter? It Depends.

Different nut butters will be healthy for different people at different times. If you have a selenium deficiency, for example, then having a nut butter that contains brazil nuts may be healthiest for you.

3-4 brazil nuts can cover your daily selenium requirements (depending on the soil they are grown in). If you have reproductive issues, autoimmune disease, or thyroid issues (common symptoms of selenium deficiency), then supplementing your diet with brazil nuts may help.

The tastiest way to supplement your diet with brazil nuts is to indulge in a nut butter called Nuttzo Organic Smooth Power Fuel Seven Nut and Seed Butter. This is my favorite nut butter because it is a delicious combination of organic cashews, organic almonds, organic Brazil nuts, organic chia seeds, organic flax seeds, organic hazelnuts, organic pumpkin seeds, and sea salt. In comparison to the other the store-bought nut butters, Nuttzo is one of the healthiest because it comes with the health benefits of multiple nuts and seeds in a delicious combination.

However, these seeds and nuts are not soaked or sprouted, so people who struggle to digest phytic acid or have other mineral deficiencies will need to find another option. Luckily, there are two healthy and delicious options that are low in phytic acid.

Related: *Sprouting to Remove Enzyme Inhibitors*

The first is sprouted almond butter. The sprouting process helps to reduce phytic acid of almonds, making them easier to

digest. The only problem with almond butter is that it contains more omega-6 than many other types of nut butter. This means that it is not as healthy as my personal favorite – coconut butter.

The Nut Butter with the Healthiest Fats

You may not consider it as a nut butter, but coconut butter is one of the healthiest “nut” butters you can have. The phytic acid content of coconut is negligible, and it is one of the best sources of healthy saturated fats called medium chain triglycerides (MCTs).

With coconut butter, you will also get all the minerals and some of the sweetness that is found in coconut water and the fiber from the coconut meat. This makes it the ideal way to consume coconut. If you define the term “nut” loosely, then this is – in my opinion – the healthiest nut butter.

What about the nut butters that are actually made from nuts?

Macadamia nut butter is arguably one of the healthiest nut butters. This is because it has the lowest omega 6 content and the most monounsaturated fats of any nut. Monounsaturated fats are another type healthy fat (different from MCTs) that enhance heart health and protect against chronic disease.

Macadamia nuts have a relatively low phytic acid content as well. If you are not a fan of coconut, then macadamia nut butter is the way to go. It’s irresistibly creamy and can be made into a sweet, savory, or salty nut butter.

Related: *Everything You Should Know About Fat*

The Takeaway

The “healthiness” of the nut butter depends on the needs of the person that’s eating it.

Don’t eat a lot of grains, nuts, legumes, and seeds, and you can digest nuts well? Have your favorite raw nut butter (just watch out for added sugars and trans fats).

Have a selenium deficiency? Have a tablespoon or two of nut butter with brazil nuts in it.

Struggle with phytic acid digestion or eat a lot of grains, nuts, legumes, and seeds every day? Eat nut butter that has lowest phytic acid content, such as macadamia nut butter and coconut butter.

Have chronic inflammation? Consume the nut butter with the lowest omega-6 content, such as macadamia nut butter and coconut butter.

Regardless of the nut butter you choose, eat it in moderation (a tablespoon or two a day), and you will get all the benefits with little to no side effects.

To get the benefits, however, you don’t have to search for an over-priced healthy nut butter at the store. You can save your money and your health by making it at home. All you need is a high-quality blender, your favorite organic nuts, and a healthy oil.

How To Make Nut Butter Better

Nut butter is one of the simplest and easiest foods to make. Here’s how you do it:

1. Get raw organic nuts (or shredded coconut)
2. Put them in a food processor or high-powered blender and turn it on

3. Blend until it turns into a creamy butter, stopping frequently to scrape the sides down. (This may take 5 to 10 minutes depending on the power of your blender.)

In 10 minutes or less, you can have your own homemade nut butter. Feel free to add a small amount of raw honey or stevia and unrefined salt to improve the taste.

You can also experiment with different herbs and spices. For example, try adding lavender, honey, and cinnamon to your macadamia or cashew nut butter to make it into a deliciously satisfying dessert.

However, one problem arises when we expose the nuts to high-speed blenders – fat oxidation. Due to the friction of blending, heat builds up and oxidizes the polyunsaturated fats in the nuts.

Preventing Fat Oxidation

To ensure that most of the delicate fats aren't oxidized, reduce the blending time. Once the nuts are blending into a grainy flour, add a couple tablespoons of tasteless coconut or avocado oil. This will make it into a nut butter much faster while adding some healthy and stable fats.

Reducing Phytic Acid

Don't forget about the phytic acid! To decrease the phytic acid content of your nuts, soak your nuts (and sprout them if they can sprout).

To soak them properly, simply put them in filtered water for the suggested time. Rinse them and change the water at least once.

Here are the soaking and sprouting times for popular nuts (including peanuts and coconuts):

Almonds

- Soaking Time: 8-12 hours
- Sprouting Time: 3 days (only if they are truly raw and not pasteurized)
- Rinse the almonds and change the water once every 12 hours

Peanuts

- Soaking Time: 12 hours
- Won't Sprout
- Roast the peanuts in the oven at 300°F for 20 minutes until they resemble a nut with more of a peanutty flavor. (This temperature will not oxidize the fats in the peanuts.)

Brazil Nuts

- Soaking Time: 3 hours
- Won't Sprout

Cashews

- Soaking Time: 2-4 hours
- Won't Sprout

Hazelnuts

- Soaking Time: 8-12 hours
- Won't Sprout

Macadamias

- Soaking Time: 2 hours
- Won't Sprout

Pecans

- Soaking Time: 6 hours
- Won't Sprout

Walnuts

- Soaking Time: 4 hours
- Won't Sprout

Coconut

- Don't Soak
- Won't Sprout
- Blend coconut flakes or buy already made coconut butter from the store

After you soak your nuts, throw them in the dehydrator or the oven at a temperature below 200 degrees Fahrenheit until they are crisp. (For almonds, wait until they sprout before you dehydrate them.)

Throw your crisp and previously-soaked nuts in the blender with some healthy fats, and you'll be able to make a healthier homemade nut butter.

Related Reading:

- *Homemade, Vegan Nut Milk Recipes and More*
- *Sprouting to Remove Enzyme Inhibitors*
- *Homemade Two Ingredient Healthy Fruit and Nut Bars*
- *10 Vegan-Friendly Sources Of Protein*

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- *Nuts and their bioactive constituents: effects on serum lipids and other factors that affect disease risk* – AJCN
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- *How to Soak & Sprout Nuts, Seeds, Grains, & Beans* – Vegetarian Times
- *Smoking Points of Fats & Oils* – The Spruce
- *Almond consumption and cardiovascular risk factors in adults with prediabetes.* – NCBI