

# THE 'LOVE NUT' How improved sexual function and a sensual history make pistachios the Love Nut this Valentine's Day

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Already known for being a delicious and healthy snack, new research suggests that pistachio nuts (<http://www.americanpistachios.org>) might now be able to add improved sexual function to their list of health benefits.

A recent Turkish study found that men with erectile dysfunction (ED) who added pistachios to their diet saw improvement in erectile function. This study supports the growing body of evidence on the health benefits of pistachios, including heart and blood vessel health, weight management and blood sugar control.

"Pistachios have been considered an aphrodisiac in some folklore," said Dr. Thomas W. Hopkins, M.D., internal medicine specialist and former member of the National Advisory Panel for Erectile Dysfunction.

"To my knowledge, this is the first study that lends support for this belief. We know that pistachios can improve blood cholesterol levels and can be part of a successful weight management program. Men, especially, may want to consider substituting pistachios for other snack foods."

The study, which was conducted by Dr. M. Altamira at Atatürk Teaching and Research Hospital in Ankara, Turkey, and published in *The International Journal of Impotence Research*<sup>2</sup>, consisted of 17 married men (ranging from 38–59 years of age) who had experienced ED for at least 12 months. All patients were evaluated using medical history and sexual history with the International Index of Erectile Function (IIEF), a physical examination and routine blood analysis. Each man ate 100 grams (about 3.5 ounces) of pistachio nuts per day for three weeks. The subjects were asked to maintain their regular daily dietary intake, physical activity and other lifestyle habits.

Study participants saw a significant improvement on IIEF scores, which measure such things as orgasmic function, sexual desire and sexual intercourse satisfaction. There was also improvement in penile ultrasound measures, but the difference was not statistically significant. Participants also had a significant reduction in total blood cholesterol and LDL ("bad") cholesterol, and a significant increase in

HDL ("good") cholesterol. The authors speculate that several attributes of pistachios may have contributed to both the erectile function and blood lipid improvements, including their healthy fats, natural plant sterols, protein, fibre and antioxidants.

Pistachio nuts are a natural health food, full of nutrients. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recognises that tree nuts, including pistachios, can be part of a heart-healthy diet. Pistachios have more nuts per serving, 49, than any other tree nut, and contain only 160 calories in this serving size.

The American Pistachio Growers trade association was not involved in this study, however for further information about the health benefits of pistachios and recipes visit [www.americanpistachios.org](http://www.americanpistachios.org).

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Notes to editors:

- American Pistachio Growers is a voluntary trade association representing members who are pistachio growers, processors and industry partners in California, Arizona and New Mexico. These states represent 100% of US commercial pistachio production
- APG pistachios are the "Official Snack" of both USA Water Polo and Miss California
- For more information, visit <http://www.AmericanPistachios.org>

1 Aldemir M, Okulu E, Neeliolu S, Erel O, Kaygil O, 2011. Pistachio diet improves erectile function parameters and serum lipid profiles in patients with erectile dysfunction. Int J Impot Res. 23(1):32-8.  
2 January 2011 issue

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