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NutritionBenefitsDietRisksSummaryCashews are a type of seed with a soft consistency and a sweet flavor. They can be a good source of protein and minerals as part of a balanced diet. Cashews are native to South America, specifically Brazil. Colonists introduced them to Africa and India. They are a good source of nutrients such as copper, magnesium, and phosphorous and can make a healthy snack.Cashews are also part of many dairy alternatives, such as cashew milk, cashew-based cheeses, and cashew cream.This article explains the nutritional value of cashews and their possible health benefits. We also share some tips on how to include cashews in the diet and discuss possible health risks.Share on PinterestWestend61/Getty ImagesThe following table shows the main nutrients in 1 ounce (oz) — or 28.35 grams (g) — of unsalted cashew nuts, according to data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). A 1 oz serving of cashews is about 18 whole cashews.The NRV for pregnant or lactating people, older adults, and children will differ from these figures.Studies have shown an association between higher nut intake and the following:However, it is important to note that this review received funding from many companies that sell nut products. Additionally, the research focuses on various types of nuts. The studies focusing only on cashews have had more mixed results.For example, a 2019 study of 42 people found that 1.5 servings of cashew nuts did not reduce markers for CVD risk over 4 weeks. Cashews may be a heart-healthy addition to the diet in combination with other nuts and seeds, but more research is necessary.Cashews may have benefits for the joints. A 2022 animal study of degenerative joint disease found that rats who received cashews daily had lower rates of inflammation and pain-like behavior. The authors suggest this could be due to the antioxidants they contain.However, larger trials in humans are necessary to confirm whether cashews have this effect on people with joint conditions such as arthritis.People can eat roasted or unroasted cashews straight from the bag or container as a snack. They can also season them with:Alternatively, people can add cashews to other foods, such as:trail mix, along with other nuts and dried fruitstir-friescurriesbiryanisaladsmeat dishes, such as cashew chicken or Sichuan porkSome use cashews to make their own nut butter or dairy product alternatives, such as milks or cheeses, too.When buying cashews, check the label for ingredients. Some options have high amounts of salt or fat as part of their coating or seasoning. Others may be sweetened with added sugars. Nuts have a high fat content, and they can become rancid. Rancid nuts are not unsafe, but they have a sharp flavor most people find unpleasant.Keeping cashews in a cool, dark, and dry place may improve their shelf life. Once opened, store them in a ziplock bag or airtight container, and eat before the expiration date.The main risk of cashew nuts, for those with allergies, is having an allergic reaction. For some, the symptoms of a reaction may be mild, but in other cases, they could be serious.Severe allergic reactions can lead to anaphylaxis, which is a medical emergency.Raw, unprocessed cashews can also cause skin irritation. They contain a substance known as urushiol, which is also in poison ivy and mango stones. Contact with urushiol can trigger a skin reaction known as contact dermatitis in some people.However, most cashews that people purchase in stores are roasted or steamed.Cashews are a type of seed with a sweet, mild flavor. They are a source of protein, as well as several minerals, including copper, magnesium, zinc, and iron. Some research suggests that they may have health benefits, such as reducing blood pressure. In combination with other nuts, they may reduce the risk of CVD.People can enjoy cashews as part of a balanced diet as a snack or as part of a main meal. When purchasing seasoned cashews, though, it is important to check the label for high levels of salt or other additional ingredients.Bones / OrthopedicsCardiovascular / CardiologyNutrition / Dietfood safetyMedical News Today has strict sourcing guidelines and relies on peer-reviewed studies, academic research institutions, and medical journals and associations. We only use quality, credible sources to ensure content accuracy and integrity. You can learn more about how we ensure our content is accurate and current by reading our editorial policy. Cashew nuts are a mild and buttery species of nut native to Central America and the Northern areas of South America, particularly Brazil. Often referred to as 'cashews,' these nuts are the seeds of fruit from the cashew tree (Anacardium occidentale). In this article, we examine the full nutrition profile of cashews, the benefits they offer, and some potential concerns. Nutrition Facts The following tables present the full nutritional values for cashew nuts per ounce (28-gram) serving. All nutrient data is courtesy of the USDA Food Composition Databases (1). Cashew Nuts: Nutrition Facts Per Oz (28-gram) Serving Calories/Nutrient Amount Calories 156.77 kcal Carbohydrate 8.56 g Fiber 0.94 g Sugars 1.68 g Fat 12.43 g Saturated Fat 2.21 g Monounsaturated Fat 6.75 g Polyunsaturated Fat 2.22 g Omega-3 Fatty Acids 0.02 g Omega-6 Fatty Acids 2.21 g Protein 5.17 g Vitamins Amount % DV Thiamin (B1) 0.12 mg 10.0 % Vitamin K1 9.67 mcg 8.1 % Pyridoxine (B6) 0.12 mg 7.1 % Pantothenic Acid (B5) 0.24 mg 4.8 % Choline 17.28 mg 3.1 % Folate 7.09 mcg 1.8 % Niacin (B3) 0.30 mg 1.9 % Vitamin E 0.26 mg 1.7 % Riboflavin (B2) 0.02 mg 1.5 % Vitamin C 0.14 mg 0.2 % Minerals Amount % DV Copper 0.62 mg 68.9 % Manganese 0.47 mg 20.4 % Magnesium 82.78 mg 19.7 % Zinc 1.64 mg 14.9 % Phosphorus 168.11 mg 13.4 % Iron 1.89 mg 10.5 % Selenium 5.64 mcg 10.3 % Potassium 187.11 mg 4.0 % Calcium 10.49 mg 0.8 % Sodium 3.40 mg 0.1 % As shown in the nutrition profile, cashews are a little higher in carbohydrates and lower in fat than most nuts. They also offer a good range of essential minerals. Health Benefits of Cashew Nuts Cashew nuts and the nutrients they contain can offer various health benefits. Here is a summary of what cashews offer. 1) Rich Source of Healthy Fats Cashew nuts are a good source of dietary fat. As shown in the nutrition values, they supply 12.4 grams of fat per serving. More than half of this fat content (6.7 grams) comes from the monounsaturated fatty acid oleic acid (2). On this note, a large amount of research suggests that oleic acid can have several beneficial health effects (3, 4, 5); Oleic acid may improve insulin sensitivity. A higher oleic acid intake appears to impact the lipid profile beneficially. Diets high in oleic acid demonstrate improvements to markers of metabolic syndrome. 2) High In Magnesium Magnesium is an essential mineral that has great importance to human health. Among the mineral's many functions, magnesium is vital for (6); Maintaining a healthy immune system Bone health Muscle and nerve function Forming new bone and DNA Further research also suggests that magnesium may play a role in lowering blood pressure and regulating blood sugar levels (7, 8). While it can be challenging to find adequate food sources of magnesium, cashew nuts offer a good amount of the mineral. An ounce serving—just a handful of nuts—provides close to 20% of the daily value for magnesium (1). 3) Moderately High In Protein Generally speaking, animal foods such as dairy, meat, and seafood are the best sources of dietary protein. However, certain plant foods can offer protein too. While nuts are not one of the most concentrated providers of plant protein, they do offer more than five grams of protein per ounce serving (1). 4) Significant Source of Copper Cashews are an excellent source of the essential mineral copper. This important mineral has a crucial role in the immune system, iron metabolism, and gene expression (9). Furthermore, copper is thought to play a significant role in cardiovascular health. According to research, a copper deficiency increases the susceptibility of LDL to oxidation, and it may increase the overall risk for cardiovascular disease (10, 11, 12). Not many foods offer high concentrations of copper, but just one ounce of cashews provides 620 mcg of the nutrient (1). This amount is equivalent to 69% of the daily value for copper. 5) May Have Benefits For Cardiovascular Health Several studies suggest that cashew nuts may have certain benefits for cardiovascular health. First of all, there are two recent randomized controlled trials which demonstrated that a dietary intervention of 28-64 grams of cashews per day could (13, 14); Reduce LDL and total cholesterol Increase HDL levels An improved ratio of non-HDL to HDL cholesterol is associated with reduced cardiovascular risk, so this would be a beneficial change (15, 16). However, it is worth noting that another similar study found that cashew nuts had no impact on markers of cardiovascular risk (17). A larger evidence-base is necessary to determine these potential benefits more accurately. 6) Moderately High In Zinc As we have already seen, cashew nuts are high in many different minerals. Zinc is another of these minerals concentrated in cashews, and one ounce provides 1.64 mg, which is around 15% of the daily value. Zinc has numerous different functions, and it is particularly important for its immune-enhancing properties. In other words; zinc helps to fight infections, bacteria, and viruses, and generally helps to keep the human body healthy (18). On this note, a systematic review and meta-analysis of 17 randomized controlled trials demonstrated that zinc might help to reduce the duration of common cold symptoms (19). Additionally, a systematic review found that higher zinc intake may have benefits for preventing the progression of age-related macular degeneration. However, the findings were somewhat inconclusive (20). 7) May Help To Lower Blood Pressure Several studies show that tree nuts may have blood-pressure-lowering properties in general. It appears that this may be true for cashew nuts too. For example, a randomized controlled trial featuring 300 adults with type 2 diabetes found that cashew intake had blood pressure benefits. In this study, consuming 30 grams of cashew nuts per day for 12 weeks in addition to a standard diabetic diet led to a greater decrease in systolic blood pressure than the control diet (standard diabetic diet without cashew nuts) (21). To be precise, the systolic blood pressure of the participants on the cashew nut diet fell from 125.5 mm Hg to 121 mm Hg. Potential Concerns and Drawbacks Similar to all nuts, cashews have some potential side effects that may be an issue for certain individuals. Allergic Reactions To Cashews Unfortunately, in some rare cases, cashew nuts can cause severe allergic reactions. Since the allergens present in cashews are so potent, these allergic reactions can even cause life-threatening anaphylaxis (severe allergic reaction) (22). Due to the strength of cashew nut allergens, only minimal amounts are necessary to cause adverse reactions (23). However, this risk of allergic reactions is not unique to cashew nuts. Other true tree nuts such as almonds, acorns, and hazelnuts can also cause severe reactions in this way. In 2016, there were 6,937 diagnosed cases of tree nut anaphylaxis in the United States. Approximately half of these individuals tested positive for cashew nut allergy (24). Also, anaphylaxis from cashew nut allergy is more common than anaphylaxis from peanuts (74.1% to 30.5% of cases) (25). Cashew Nuts Are High In Oxalates One more potential drawback of cashew nuts is their high concentration of oxalates (oxalic acid). Oxalates are relatively common in plant foods, but cashew nuts contain a significant amount (26). While usually not an issue for healthy people, excessive intake of oxalate can occasionally cause problems for people with kidney issues or those at risk of developing kidney stones (27, 28). In some instances, case studies show that cashew nuts have led to decreased kidney function. In one example, a 63-year old woman suffered from a progressive decline in kidney function that improved after she stopped consuming cashews (29). Cashew nuts contain roughly 260 mg of oxalate per 100 grams. Most prescribed low-oxalate diets contain less than 50 mg of oxalate per day. Final Thoughts In summary, cashew nuts are a reasonably nutritious nut that provides a good source of fat and minerals. For this reason, a small serving of cashews can add a lot of beneficial nutrients to the diet, and they're one of the healthier "snack" options. As a bonus, these nuts taste delicious too. For more on nuts, see this guide to the little-known pili nut. Cashew nuts are available in the market year-round. In the stores, only urushiol treated and shelled cashew kernels. In the stores, one can find raw, salted, sweetened, or candied cashews. Buy shelled nuts that feature a bright cream-white, compact, uniform, and feel heavy in hand. They should be free from cracks, mold, and spots and free of rancid smell. At home, store cashew kernels inside an airtight container, and keep them in the refrigerator to avoid them turning rancid. Fresh nuts should keep well for 5-6 months if stored so. Cashews have a crunchy, buttery texture with a pleasantly sweet, fruity aroma. Here are some serving tips: Cashew fried rice with brussel sprouts and tomato (Photo: by waldopics) Cashews can be enjoyed as a snack as they are. They can also be eaten salted or sweetened. Cashews are nutty yet pleasantly sweet in taste. They can be relished as a garnish in various kinds of sweets and desserts. Cashews, along with almonds and other dry fruits, are being used in savory rice dishes Hyderbad-biriyani, rice-pulao…etc, and in curry (kaaju-shahi-paneer) preparations in Indian, Persian, Pakistani, and Middle-Eastern regions. Split or crushed cashew along with almonds, pistachio is often sprinkled over desserts, particularly sundaes, and other confectionaries to enhance flavor. The nuts are widely employed in the confectionery, as an addition to biscuits, sweets, and cakes. Cashew apples are among popular fruits; eaten on their own in many regions around the world. They are also being used to prepare healthy drinks. Cashew nut allergy is a common hypersensitivity condition in some individuals, especially in children. The reaction symptoms may range from simple skin itching (hives) to severe forms of anaphylactic manifestations, including breathing difficulty, pain abdomen, vomiting, and diarrhea. The allergic manifestations are due to the chemical compound anacardic acid (urushiol) that is present in cashew apples, shells, and nuts. Cross-reactions may also occur with some other nuts and fruits of the Anacardiaceae family such as mango, pistachio, etc. Individuals with known allergic reactions to cashew nuts and fruit may observe caution while eating them. (Medical disclaimer). >>-Back to Nuts and Seeds from Cashew nut. Visit here for an impressive list of nuts with complete illustrations of their nutrition facts and health benefits. >>-Back to Home page. Further Resources: Cashews are rich in nutrients and may offer several health benefits, such as promoting heart health, preventing blood sugar spikes, and more.Cashews are kidney-shaped seeds sourced from the cashew tree, a tropical tree native to Brazil but now cultivated in various warm climates worldwide.While "raw" cashews are widely sold, truly raw cashews are not safe to eat, as they contain a substance known as urushiol, found in poison ivy. Urushiol is toxic, and contact with it can trigger a skin reaction in some people.Cashew kernels are cooked in processing to remove this toxic liquid, and the resulting product is sold as "raw."Although people often refer to them as tree nuts, cashews are really seeds. They're rich in nutrients and beneficial plant compounds and make for an easy addition to many dishes. This article reviews the nutrition, benefits, and downsides of cashews to determine whether they're good for you. Cashews are rich in a range of nutrients. A 1 ounce (oz), or 28 gram (g), serving of unroasted, unsalted cashews provides the following:Calories: 157Protein: 5.16 gFat: 12.4 gCarbs: 8.56 gFiber: 0.9 gCopper: 0.6 milligrams (mg)Magnesium: 82.8 mgManganese: 0.4 mgZinc: 1.6 mgPhosphorus: 168 mgIron: 1.8 mgSelenium: 5.6 micrograms (µg)Thiamin: 0.1 mgVitamin K: 9.6 µgVitamin B6: 0.1 mgCashews contain unsaturated fats, a category of fats linked to a lower risk of heart disease.In addition, cashews contain a significant amount of copper, a mineral essential for: energy productionhealthy brain developmentstrong immune systemCashews are a source of antioxidants. Antioxidants are beneficial plant compounds that keep your body healthy by neutralizing damage-causing molecules known as free radicals. In turn, this helps reduce inflammation and increases your body's ability to stay healthy and free from disease.Cashews are also a source of polyphenols and carotenoids, two classes of antioxidants also found in other tree nuts.That said, the number of cashew-specific studies is limited, and more research is necessary.Some research is starting to link nut-rich diets to greater weight loss and overall lower body weights compared with nut-free diets.Research from 2018 suggests that the human body may only digest and absorb some of the calories in cashews. This is likely because a portion of the fat they contain remains trapped within the cashew's fibrous wall rather than being absorbed during digestion.On the other hand, roasting nuts may increase your body's ability to fully digest them, thereby increasing the number of calories the body absorbs.As a result, weight loss benefits may be strongest for whole, "raw" cashews, though more research is necessary to confirm this. Diets rich in nuts, including cashews, have links with fewer cases of cardiovascular disease.A 2019 study found that people with type 2 diabetes who consumed 10% of their daily calories from cashews had lower LDL cholesterol to HDL cholesterol ratios than those who ate no cashews at all.However, a 2019 review shows conflicting results. It suggests that regular intake of cashews may lower blood pressure and triglyceride levels, but the review found no effect on total, LDL, or HDL cholesterol levels.While cashews may benefit heart health as with other nuts, more research is necessary to confirm this.People with type 2 diabetes may benefit from adding cashews to their diet. That's in part because cashews are a source of fiber, a nutrient that helps prevent blood sugar spikes and which may help protect against type 2 diabetes.Studies looking at the effects of cashews on blood sugar levels are limited. However, in a 2019 study, people with type 2 diabetes who ate 10% of their daily calories from cashews had overall lower insulin levels than those who ate no cashews at all.Speak with a doctor for more information about the possible benefits for people with type 2 diabetes or for protecting against the condition.Cashews are very easy to add to your diet. You can eat them "raw" or roasted. They make an easy portable snack. You can incorporate whole or ground cashews into a variety of dishes, ranging from scrambled tofu and stir fries, to soup, salads, and stews.Cashew butter is another way to add cashews to your diet. Spread it on toast or stir it into yogurt or oatmeal. You can also process cashew butter together with oats and your favorite dried fruit to make homemade, bake-free energy balls.You can also soak cashews and blend them together with apple cider vinegar or lemon juice to make your own dairy-free sour cream or cream cheese. Use these to add flavor to meals or make dairy-free versions of your favorite desserts. Cashews are generally a safe addition to most people's diets. Keep in mind that roasted or salted cashews can contain high levels of added oils or salt. For this reason, it may be best to opt for unsalted dry roasted or "raw" (unroasted) varieties instead. Cashews are classified as tree nuts. Therefore, people allergic to tree nuts, such as almonds, Brazil nuts, pecans, pistachios, walnuts, or hazelnuts, may have a higher risk of also being allergic to cashews. It is also possible to be allergic to one tree nut. This means that you may have a cashew nut allergy but you are not allergic to other nuts.Seek immediate medical help if signs of an allergic reaction develop. These can include, but are not limited to, the following:breathing problemsswelling of the tongue, mouth, or throatrashcoughingdizzinessconfusionpale or blueish skinCashews are a source of fiber, protein, and healthy fats. They also contain a variety of vitamins, minerals, and health-protective beneficial plant compounds.Some research on nuts in general suggests that they may promote weight loss, blood sugar management, and heart health. However, there is limited research on cashews. Therefore, more cashew-specific studies are necessary to confirm these benefits.Speak with a doctor for more information about the possible benefits of cashews and other nuts, as well as advice on how to include them in your diet.Healthline has strict sourcing guidelines and relies on peer-reviewed studies, academic research institutions, and medical journals and associations. We only use quality, credible sources to ensure content accuracy and integrity. You can learn more about how we ensure our content is accurate and current by reading our editorial policy.Anaphylaxis. (2023). DJ, et al. (2018). Metabolizable energy from cashew nuts is less than that predicted by Atwater factors. . (2022). RD, et al. (2019). 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Cashew nuts in a mouse model of colitis. of fat. (n.d.). J, et al. (2021). Mixed tree nut snacks compared to refined carbohydrate snacks resulted in weight loss and increased satiety during both weight loss and weight maintenance: A 24-week randomized controlled trial. C, et al. (2019). The importance of antioxidants and place in today's scientific and technological studies. Cashews might not get as much attention as other nuts. But they should. These sweet, buttery-tasting nuts are more than just a nutrient-packed snack. They're also an incredibly versatile addition to all kinds of dishes, from salads to grain bowls to desserts. Plus, they're easily transformed into cashew butter, milk, cream and even cheese. So, they're an excellent option if you're trying to work more plant foods into your rotation. Intrigued? Read on to learn all about what cashews can do for your health and why they deserve a spot in your pantry. Eating nuts has consistently been linked to a lower risk of heart disease, likely in part due to their favorable fat profile. And cashews are no exception. "Cashews are a great source of heart-healthy mono- and polyunsaturated fats, which can support heart health," says Gillean Barkyoumb, M.S., RDN, a registered dietitian and owner of the What's for Dinner Club. Those healthy fats may improve your cholesterol when consumed instead of foods rich in saturated fat, like beef or butter. For example, one study found that when people with type 2 diabetes consumed 10% of their daily calories from cashews, their cholesterol levels improved compared to people who didn't eat cashews. If you've been avoiding cashews (or any nuts!) because you think they're high in calories, get this: Research has found that when we eat cashews, we might not absorb all their calories. That's because their fiber is believed to trap some of their fat, whisking it out of your body. So, even though an ounce of dry-roasted cashews technically contains 163 calories, we only absorb roughly 84% of that or about 137 calories. There's more good news. Cashews' combination of protein and heart-healthy fats can slow digestion. That may keep you satisfied for longer, helping you eat less overall. Plus, cashews are low in sugar, making them a better-for-you option than other go-to snacks, like chips or candy, says Brannon Blount, M.S., RDN, a registered dietitian and owner of Brannon in Balance Nutrition LLC. Plenty of studies support the benefits of nuts for diabetes prevention and management. Could cashews help, too? For starters, cashews are low in carbohydrates (only 9 grams per ounce of cashews). They're also rich in other blood sugar–friendly nutrients like protein, fiber, healthy fats and antioxidants. Research suggests habitually swapping in cashews for foods that are high in refined carbs can be a good blood sugar management strategy. Remember that study where people with type 2 diabetes consumed 10% of their daily calories from cashews? They also experienced lower insulin levels than volunteers who didn't eat cashews. Building sturdy bones isn't just about calcium. Nutrients like vitamin K, magnesium and phosphorus also do good things for your skeleton. And cashews are a delicious way to get all three of them! Cashews naturally contain a cocktail of antioxidants, especially polyphenols and flavonoids. These powerful compounds help fight inflammation and protect against oxidative stress that can lead to chronic diseases like heart disease and cancer. Cashews also provide zinc, an antioxidant mineral that keeps your immune system strong and healthy. One ounce (28 grams) of dry-roasted cashews without added salt provides the following:Calories: 163Total Carbohydrates: 9 gDietary Fiber: 1 gTotal Sugars: 1 gProtein: 4 gTotal Fat: 13 gSaturated Fat: 3 gSodium: 5 mgVitamin K: 10 mcgPhosphorus: 139 mgMagnesium: 74 mgZinc: 2 mg Even though cashews offer plenty of nutrients, you should avoid them if you're allergic to tree nuts. In addition, "cashews have high oxalate levels, which can lead to kidney stones," says Blount. If you have a history of kidney stones, speak with your health care provider before adding them to your diet. Of course, cashews are a healthy, delicious snack. But that's just the beginning! Here are more tasty ways to add them to your day. As a crunchy topping. Toss unsalted roasted cashews into yogurt, oatmeal, salads and grain bowls. Or sprinkle them on top of a Garlic Cashew Chicken Casserole. Spice them up. If you've got unsalted cashews in the pantry, give them a flavor pop with some seasoning, like these Curried Cashews. Turn them into a dairy substitute. Cashew's unique fat and protein profile makes them an excellent base for dairy-free cooking. Try them in this versatile Cashew Cream, blend them into a creamy sauce for Vegan Mac & Cheese or fold them into a silky Vegan Cheesecake. Turn them into a chocolaty treat. Whip up a batch of these Dark Chocolate Cashew Clusters for a simple three-ingredient dessert. Whether you're looking for a new snack or a crunchy topping for your salad, grain bowl or main dish, give cashews a try. Their healthy fat, fiber and protein make them naturally satisfying and filling. These nutrient-packed nuts may also be helpful for promoting heart health, blood sugar management, bone health and more. And if you're following a vegan or dairy-free diet, cashews can be a tasty way to add creaminess to dishes that traditionally contain milk or cheese. Time to stock up! Frequently Asked Questions "Cashews are nutrient-dense, meaning they provide a lot of beneficial nutrients in a small amount," says Barkyoumb. Research has found that regularly consuming cashews may support heart health, improve blood sugar, reduce inflammation and help with weight management. The amount of cashews you should eat in a day depends on your overall calorie needs and health goals, says Barkyoumb. For most people, about an ounce a day, or roughly 18 cashew nuts, is just right. Yes, cashews naturally contain a variety of antioxidants like polyphenols and flavonoids that may help tame inflammation. We often think of them as nuts. But cashews are the seeds of cashew apples, which grow in trees native to Central and South America as well as several Caribbean islands.When they're freshly picked, the shell that holds the cashew has a toxic oil that can cause blisters on your skin, like poison ivy. The shells are treated with heat, then removed to get to the nut inside. This is why cashews are never sold in the shell, and one reason they can be expensive. The cashew is beloved around the world because it has a rich flavor and many uses. They're popular as a snack, topping, as cashew butter, and in dairy replacements.What is cashew butter?Cashew butter is a spread made from cashews. The process includes roasting cashews for 10-15 minutes, then grinding them until they release oil and take on a creamy texture. Extra oil can be added to help with the texture.What is cashew cream?Cashew "cream" is a nondairy cream substitute made from cashews. It's often used in place of heavy cream or sour cream in dishes such as soups and desserts. You make it by soaking and draining cashews, then blending them with the leftover water to create the creamy liquid. Rich in protein, healthy fats, and antioxidants, cashews offer a variety of noteworthy health benefits. They're also a modest source of protein. Photo Credit: Moment / Getty Images Rich in protein, healthy fats, and antioxidants such as polyphenols, cashews offer several health benefits:Reduced cholesterolCashews have had a bad reputation for containing saturated fat. But much of the fat in cashews comes from stearic acids, which experts think have little effect on blood cholesterol. Research suggests that people who eat a small serving of cashews every day may see a small reduction in LDL "bad" cholesterol. Heart disease preventionNot only can they lower bad cholesterol, cashews may help prevent heart disease due to their high magnesium content. Getting enough magnesium may reduce your risk of ischemic heart disease, which happens when your heart doesn't get enough blood.Stroke preventionThe magnesium in cashews may help reduce the risk of stroke. This link is thought to be strongest for hemorrhagic strokes, which happen when a weakened blood vessel ruptures and spills blood into the brain.Diabetes prevention or managementCashews are low in carbohydrates, especially compared to many other common snacks. This limits their impact on blood sugar, making them a good choice for people with type 2 diabetes, as well as for those looking to prevent the condition.Cashews are rich in healthy fats, including monounsaturated and polyunsaturated types. They're also a good source of protein. That's one reason they're popular with many vegans and vegetarians.Cashews are also a good source of:MagnesiumManganesePhosphorusZincVitamin B6Vitamin KNutrients per servingA 1-ounce serving of cashews contains:Calories: 165Protein: 5 gramsFat: 11 gramsCarbohydrates: 10 gramsFiber: Less than 1 gramSugar: about 2 gramsThings to look out forCashews are high in calories, so keep portion size in mind. They can cause serious reactions in people who are allergic to them.You can get cashews year-round at nearly all grocery stores and in many specialty food shops. You can buy them roasted or "raw." Raw cashews are processed with steam to remove their hard shell.If you buy them in bulk, transfer them to an airtight container when you get home. Keep them away from high heat. Room temperature is OK for short-term storage. For longer time frames, keep them in the fridge or freezer. Whether you eat them on their own or use them in cooking, they have a delightfully nutty flavor and a satisfying crunch. Here are a few easy ways to include cashews in meals and snacks:Combine them with dried fruit, chocolate chips, and nuts to create trail mix.Toss cashews with romaine lettuce, tomatoes, and a hint of olive oil for a healthy and satisfying salad.Add them to a wrap featuring chicken, mustard, and mayonnaise. Combine cashews with coconut, maple syrup, and rolled oats. Mix these ingredients before baking to form granola.Sprinkle salted cashews on top of roasted green beans.Enjoy them with yogurt, granola, and fruit in a tasty parfait.Prepare them with rice, soy sauce, chicken, and red pepper flakes in a slow cooker.Toss cashews with lo mein noodles coated in oyster sauce and soy sauce.Cashew milk is made the same way as almond milk but has a more earthy flavor. First, the cashews are shelled and roasted. Next, they're soaked in filtered water. From there, they're ground into a paste, then blended with water. Liquid created while straining this pulp forms the final product. Because of its thick texture, it works well for drinking or in cereal. You can also use cashew milk in baking or many other recipes.Cashew milk nutritionNutrients in cashew milk vary. With some brands, one cup of unsweetened cashew milk has:25 caloriesLess than 1 gram of protein2 grams of fat1 gram of carbohydrates0 grams of fiber0 grams of sugar by Meenakshi Nagdeve last updated - March 26, 2024 Medically reviewed by Vanessa Voltolina (MS, RD) The powerful health benefits of cashews may include a healthy heart, strong nerve and muscle function, and improved bone and oral health. They also provide relief from diabetes, anemia, and gallstones. By offering an antioxidant defense, they also encourage a better immune system. What are Cashews? Cashews are rich in nutrients. They belong to the family of Anacardiaceae, which includes mangoes and pistachios. Cashews are originally native to the coastal areas of north-eastern Brazil. They are kidney-shaped seeds widely cultivated in tropical climates. Cashews are typically grown in countries like India, Sri Lanka, Kenya, and Tanzania. The nuts are found at the bottom of the fruit known as a cashew apple, and have diverse uses, particularly in Brazil, Asia, and Africa. [1] Cashews Nutrition Facts Cashews are good for you as they are a powerhouse of proteins and essential minerals, including copper, calcium, magnesium, iron, phosphorus, potassium, and zinc. Sodium is also present in very small quantities. According to the USDA cashews also contain vitamin C, B- vitamins, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin), folate, and vitamin E (alpha-tocopherol), and vitamin K (phylloquinone). They are a source of oleic acid and provide a good quantity of monounsaturated fat and low amounts of polyunsaturated fats with no total cholesterol content when consumed in moderation. An ounce of cashew contains 157 calories and about 9 gm of carbohydrates. [2] Health Benefits of Cashews The health benefits of cashews are incredible! Here are just a few of the reasons why you should add them to your diet: May Keep Heart Healthy Cashews are known to be a good source of healthy dietary fats, which are essential for our body to absorb the fat-soluble vitamins (vitamin A, D, E, and K) and produce fatty acids that are vital for the development of the brain and blood clotting. These healthy fats include monounsaturated fats (MUFA) and polyunsaturated fats (PUFA). They are good for the heart and help reduce bad cholesterol (LDL cholesterol) if consumed in appropriate amounts, even in diabetics. [4] [5] [6] LDL cholesterol can rise as a result of excessive consumption of saturated fats, posing a major threat to people suffering from cardiovascular diseases like atherosclerosis (aka hardening of arteries). Studies have demonstrated that choosing unsaturated fats over saturated fats enhances the levels of HDL cholesterol, reduces triglyceride levels, and beneficially lowers blood pressure as well. The inclusion of nuts such as cashews, fish, and vegetable oils like olive oil and canola oil in the diet can provide these healthy unsaturated fats to the body. [7] [8] May Make Your Muscles and Nerves Healthier Cashews are a good source of magnesium, which is vital for the healthy development of bones, muscles, tissues, and the body's organs. Magnesium may help maintain blood pressure, boost immunity, maintain nerve function, and keep the bones strong. It also may be involved in metabolic functions and helps regulate the blood sugar levels of the body (via insulin activity). A deficiency of magnesium can alter the metabolism of calcium and the hormones responsible for its regulation. [9] [10] May Aid in Managing Diabetes Cashews possibly contain very low amounts of sugar, and no harmful cholesterol, making them safe for people with diabetes. However, only 4-5 cashew nuts are recommended per day by nutritionists. [11] Cashews are rich in protein. Photo Credit: Shutterstock May Promote Formation of RBC Cashews are rich in copper, which may help in the metabolism of iron, aiding in the formation of red blood cells (RBC), and helping to keep the bones and immune system healthy. It can also be vital for the nervous and skeletal systems of the body. A deficiency of copper in the body may result in osteoporosis, irregular heartbeats, and anemia. [12] May Boost Bone & Oral Health Cashews provide phosphorus, which can be essential for the healthy development of teeth and bones. Phosphorus may also aid in protein synthesis, absorption of carbohydrates and fats, and the maintenance of cellular health. [13] [14] May Reduce Risk of Anemia Cashews are known to be a source of dietary iron which is known to be vital for carrying oxygen around the body and aids in the functioning of enzymes and the immune system. A deficiency of iron in the diet can lead to fatigue, anemia, and increased susceptibility to infections. [15] May Prevent Gallstones Gallstones are stone-like deposits that usually consist of cholesterol, which accumulates in the gallbladder. Risk factors include age, weight, and any gastrointestinal issues. Regular inclusion of healthy nuts like cashews can help lower the risk of the formation of gallstones. [16] [17] May Boost Immune System Cashews contain zinc, which plays a vital role in the strengthening of the immune system against microbial infections, and the healing of wounds. It can be extremely important during pregnancy for the growth of the baby and the developmental years of childhood to maintain a healthy body. [18] Cashew nuts have a rich buttery flavor with a hint of sweetness. How To Eat Cashews? Cashew nuts have a rich buttery flavor with a hint of sweetness. They can be enjoyed either roasted or plain, and with or without salt. They make a healthy snack. Cashews are a popular ingredient in a range of foods like curries, cookies, biscuits, and ice cream. Cashews are also used to make creamy vegan sauces and vegan milk. Each ounce of cashews contains around 160 calories, so it's best to limit yourself to a handful (16-18 nuts) a day. You can roast the nuts for a delicious snack. Alternatively, you can use them in the following ways: Side Effects of Cashews Let us look at the side effects of excessive cashew consumption. Kidney atones: Cashews contain oxalate salts, which interfere with the absorption of calcium in the body. The accumulated calcium can result in the formation of kidney stones. Research conducted on this topic concluded that people who are prone to develop kidney stones should consider eating only small to moderate amounts of cashew nuts. [19] [20] Cashew allergy: Despite several health benefits, they can be dangerous for those who are allergic to tree nuts. It is informative to know that along with the changing national standards in food manufacturing, handling, and processing practices, such allergies also vary for different regions or countries. [21] Allergic reactions caused by tree nuts such as cashews, walnuts, and pistachios can be mild or severe. It is advisable to consult a doctor if one develops any allergies after consuming cashews. [22] Anaphylaxis: Anaphylaxis is a fast progressive allergic reaction that can happen to the whole body due to some substance or chemical to which the body has developed sensitivity. It is most commonly triggered by food allergies. As demonstrated by various research studies, cashew nuts can pose a high risk of anaphylaxis. It can lead to symptoms like noisy breathing, unconsciousness, pale appearance, swelling of the tongue or throat, and hoarseness in the voice. Anaphylaxis is a medical emergency and should be given the utmost attention. [23] [24] [25] [26] If you have an allergy, be aware of the following: Contact dermatitis: Contact dermatitis is an itchy skin ailment that occurs when the skin comes in contact with an allergen. Hives and swelling can develop around the mouth or other parts that have come in contact with the nuts or their shells. The anacardic acid present in cashews is also the reason for the vesication of the cashew nut shell liquid and can lead to acute skin rashes and allergies. [27] Gastrointestinal discomfort: Some people might experience nausea, diarrhea, abdominal cramping, coughing, and vomiting if they have an allergy to cashews. Breathing difficulties: A runny nose, coughing, and shortness of breath can occur if you have a cashew allergy. More severe reactions can result in a fatal condition like glottic edema or anaphylaxis. [28] Barring a few exceptions, cashews are a healthy option to be included in the diet. If consumed in appropriate quantities, they can help maintain a robust and steady state of health. Nuts can stand as a good alternative to compensate for essential nutrients, particularly in those who are vegetarian, vegan, or avoid meat products. [29] References Report Error in this Article Rate this article Average rating 4.2 out of 5.0 based on 1692 user(s).