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5-17-2016

Nuts as a Healthy Food: How to Search This Popular Research Topic in PubMed

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Nuts as a Healthy Food: How to Search This Popular Research Topic in PubMed

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Searching for nuts as food is difficult. As with most plant-based foods, MeSH terms for specific types of nuts are in the **Plants** explosion instead of in the **Food** explosion. Nuts are especially tricky because the MeSH term **Nuts** is not an explosion, and most articles on specific types of nuts are not indexed to the term **Nuts**. So it's necessary to search for specific nuts to retrieve articles on them.

A caveat—As with nutrition topics in general, and plant-based foods in particular, searching in PubMed is complicated, largely because many plant-based substances are used as foods and also as medicines or experimental organisms. A list of articles on specific nut types is likely to contain some articles that are not food-related.

Almonds



Search terms: almond [tiab] OR almonds [tiab] OR prunus dulcis [mh]

Citations: 1945

Hazelnuts



Search terms: hazelnut [tiab] OR hazelnuts [tiab] OR corylus [MeSH]

Citations: 883

Pecans



Search terms: pecan [tiab] OR pecans [tiab] OR carya [MeSH]

Citations: 325

Searching for Nut Types

The general idea of searching for specific types of nuts is simple: Do an OR search that includes the common name and botanical name. In most cases, articles on a specific nut type will be indexed under the botanical name, but using the common name is always a good idea. See the example below for searching walnuts.

walnut [tiab] OR walnuts [tiab] OR juglans [MeSH]

It is necessary to restrict the search for the common names to the title and abstract [tiab] fields because there are many streets in the Address field that are named after nuts (e.g., 4325 Walnut St.).

Walnuts



Search terms: walnut [tiab] OR walnuts [tiab] OR juglans [MeSH]

Citations: 1533

Peanuts



Peanuts are a special case. Unlike the other nuts here, they grow on herbaceous plants instead of on trees and, as members of the bean family, they are nutritionally more closely related to beans than to other nuts. There is also a separate MeSH term, **Peanut Hypersensitivity**, dealing with peanut allergies.

Because peanuts are commonly used as experimental plants, many of the articles about them are not related to nutrition. To focus on nutritional aspects, we suggest incorporating the Diet, Food, and Nutrition explosion into the search:

(peanut [tiab] OR peanuts [tiab] OR arachis [mh])
 AND Diet, Food, and Nutrition [mh]

Citations: 2932

Cashews



Search terms: cashew [tiab] OR cashews [tiab] OR anacardium [MeSH]

Citations: 586

Brazil Nuts



Search terms: brazil nut [tiab] OR brazil nuts [tiab] OR bertholletia [MeSH]

Citations: 316