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The Walnut Swap Plan

For adults already hitting their protein target who want the cheaper heart upgrade: what an ounce of walnuts actually does, and how to swap it in without adding calories.

✓ Checked against American Heart Association · Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health · Mayo Clinic · USDA

The short answer

1. **Protein:** ~4g an ounce, enough once meals hit your target
2. **Cholesterol:** daily walnuts lowered LDL in a 2-year trial
3. **Heart:** nuts a few times a week, lower cardiac risk
4. **Cost:** pennies a serving, replacing a snack you already buy

1 Check whether you already hit your protein target

WHY THIS WORKS

Once your meals reach about 1.0 to 1.2 grams of protein per kilogram of body weight, no human trial shows extra powder adds meaningful muscle. The scoop is buying a number you already hit.

SAY THIS AT YOUR VISIT

"My daily protein is around ___ grams from food. Do I actually need a supplement on top of that?"

CHECKLIST

- ✓ Add up the protein in your three usual meals
- ✓ Compare it to 1.0 to 1.2 g per kg of body weight
- ✓ If you are already there, drop the daily powder

Source: general dietary-protein guidance

2 Add one ounce of walnuts most days

WHY THIS WORKS

An ounce of walnuts carries about 4g protein, 2g fiber, and 2.5g of plant omega-3 (USDA). In a two-year trial, a daily serving lowered LDL cholesterol by an average of 4.3 mg/dL in older adults (AHA, 2021).

SAY THIS AT YOUR VISIT

"I'm swapping a daily snack for an ounce of walnuts to help my cholesterol. Anything I should watch for?"

CHECKLIST

- ✓ Buy raw, unsalted walnuts
- ✓ Pre-portion one ounce, about 14 halves
- ✓ Use them to replace a snack, not to add one

Source: USDA FoodData Central; American Heart Association, 2021

3 Recheck your cholesterol in about 12 weeks

WHY THIS WORKS

Eating nuts several times a week is linked with a 30 to 50 percent lower risk of major cardiovascular events (Harvard T.H. Chan). The per-person LDL change is modest, but it compounds over years of a steady habit.

SAY THIS AT YOUR VISIT

> *"Can we recheck my lipid panel in about 12 weeks to see if this diet change is moving my LDL?"*

CHECKLIST

- ✓ Put the recheck on your calendar now
- ✓ Keep the walnut swap steady until then
- ✓ Compare your LDL against today's baseline

Source: Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health

FULL SOURCES

American Heart Association (2021), Eating walnuts every day could lower bad cholesterol in older adults · Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Nuts for the Heart · Mayo Clinic (2024), Nuts and your heart · USDA FoodData Central, English walnuts

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