Beans and legumes contain a variety of vitamins, minerals and other key nutrients like fiber. Eating beans is associated with lower body weight, better blood sugar control, and reduced risk of heart disease.

**3 SIMPLE GUIDELINES**

- The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend 3-5 servings of beans/legumes per week.
- One serving of beans/legumes is ½ cup cooked beans. If it’s serving as the main source of protein for the meal, you can increase the serving up to 1 cup. When preparing beans, ½ cup dry produces 1 cup cooked.
- Beans are a good source of vegetable protein and fiber, which increases feelings of fullness and reduces hunger, helping with appetite control.

**SHOPPING TIPS**

- Save money by buying dry beans and preparing them yourself. If saving time is a priority, choose canned beans, which take less time to prepare.
- Look for low-sodium canned beans with no added sugar. Rinse and drain before preparing to reduce starch and salt content.
- Don’t limit yourself to one type of bean or legume. There are so many options to choose from. Experiment with pinto, navy, kidney, pink, and black beans, and try out lentils, peas, chickpeas, and soybeans - all contain little or no total fat, trans-fat, sodium and cholesterol.

**WE FEEL YOU**

“Ugh! Beans hurt my stomach!” Many of us are cautious about eating legumes because we worry about digestive distress. However, recent studies show intestinal gas returns to normal after a few days of increased intake. Beans are a great source of soluble and insoluble fiber. Fiber needs water to move through the body so increasing water can reduce discomfort.

**RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS**

A diet rich in beans (4 or more servings a week) has been found to reduce heart disease risk by 22%.

Beans are a low glycemic, complex carb that help to control blood sugar levels.

Eating beans may reduce your risk of developing certain types of cancer, due to their high levels of antioxidants.

**SOURCES**


Mark J Messina. Legumes and soybeans: overview of their nutritional profiles and health effects. The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, 1999. ([http://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/70/3/439s.full](http://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/70/3/439s.full))

