

FIGHT



This yummy childhood favorite may be just what you need to finally slim down.

T F E A T WITH PEANUT BUTTER POWER

By Colleen Pierre, RD

10 Women Prove That *Prevention's* Peanut Butter Diet Really Works

Last January, when *Prevention* asked me to put a group of women on their Peanut Butter Diet, I couldn't say no. Here was a chance to see for myself whether recent studies that suggested peanut butter makes it easier to lose weight could be true. I even tried the diet myself. Introduced in *Prevention* last year, this weight loss plan is now a book, *Prevention's Peanut Butter Diet* (St. Martin's Press, 2001).

The results? I have to admit, I'm astonished. **Over the past 20 years, I've counseled thousands of weight loss clients, but I've never before seen success like this.** Everyone in the group lost weight. In 5 months, our group of 10 women lost a total of 140 lb, with individual losses ranging up to 27 lb. Not one dieter dropped out.

And the best part? Since the program ended, many of us have kept on losing *more* weight! We've found the Peanut Butter Diet easy to stick with as a way of life.



A PEANUT BUTTER DIET DAY

A sample woman's menu

Breakfast

- 1 small banana
- 1 serving whole grain cereal
- 1 c fat-free milk
- 1 Tbsp sliced almonds

Lunch

- 2 slices whole wheat bread
- 2 Tbsp peanut butter
- 2 Tbsp jelly
- 1 apple
- Calorie-free beverage

Snack

- 2 Tbsp peanut butter
- 1 c celery sticks
- 6-oz can Calcium-Enriched V8

Dinner

- 4 oz skinless chicken breast
- 2 c salad veggies
- 1 oz reduced-fat cheese
- ¼ avocado or 2 Tbsp nuts
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 2 tsp vinegar
- Calorie-free beverage

Snack

- 1 tangerine

Happy Tummy Club

So what's the big secret to peanut butter? I think it's simple. Peanut butter, a food almost everybody loves, has incredible staying power—the ability to keep your tummy feeling satisfied a nice long time. Studies by researchers at Harvard, Penn State, and Purdue Universities have demonstrated this, and now we have too. **Though I won't say we didn't have a poke of hunger now and then, to a woman, we were amazed at how not hungry we were!**

A satisfying peanut butter and jelly sandwich at 7:30 PM helped Paulette Stokes, a hospital insurance verifier, conquer her nighttime snacking and drop an incredible 25 lb. "I enjoy peanut butter so much, and knowing I can have my sandwich helps me leave all that other food alone!" she beams.

Mary Blann, an exercise specialist, loved peanut butter as a kid, but gave it up years ago. Now she enjoys it on apple slices most afternoons for fewer calories than the cookies and candy she used to munch on. And she stays happily full until dinner. The result: Thirteen pounds have bitten the dust.

Calories Still Count

Let's get something straight up front. Peanut butter isn't magic. For weight loss to happen, calories in have to be less than calories out. So, like all diets, the Peanut Butter Diet is a reduced-calorie plan: 1,500 calories for women and 2,200 for men, which lets most people drop half a pound or more a week.

But although you're eating fewer calories, you don't seem to miss them because every day, women can enjoy 4 tablespoons of yummy, stick-with-you peanut butter (6 tablespoons if you're a guy). The tricky part, since peanut butter has 190 calories in every 2-tablespoon serving, is keeping calories in check. That's where the Peanut Butter Diet comes in, with a variety of simple meal plans that do the calorie-counting for you.

Portion control is also key. A quick way to measure your 2-tablespoon PB serving is to scoop out a glob the size of a Ping-Pong ball, almost exactly 2 tablespoons.

This Just In! Peanuts are so satisfying, they actually suppress your appetite for hours after you eat them (*International Jour. of Obesity*, Aug 2002).

Our Fastest Favorites

Another big reason the Peanut Butter Diet works is that it's so easy—no preparation required. That was essential for our group of working women. Says Cheryl Parks, a nurse who successfully zapped 25 lb, "Peanut butter was quick and satisfying."

Our days usually included two of these fast options.

Breakfast: Two tablespoons of peanut butter melted into oatmeal, spooned onto whole wheat toast, or slathered on a bagel.

Lunch: The incredibly satisfying PB and jelly sandwich (made with 2 tablespoons PB).

Afternoon snack: Two tablespoons of PB spread on celery, baby carrots, or apple slices.

Dinner or dessert: Quick recipes from the Peanut

NAME
Colleen Pierre
POUNDS
LOST **13**

HILMAR (2)

Leader of the Pack



Job: Registered dietitian

Age: 59

Exercise: Walking, elliptical machine, weight lifting, tennis

When Prevention

asked me to guide these women through the Peanut Butter Diet, I had no intention of getting personally involved. Past diets always left me hungry (not just before, but during and after every meal too), sapped my strength, and made me tired, irritable, cranky, and uncoordinated. At age 59, I felt too darned old for that nonsense. I was resigned to living with my menopausal pounds.

But the Peanut Butter Diet intrigued me. Okay, I thought, I lost weight after each of my kids was born by eating peanut butter sandwiches for lunch. I'll give it one more try. Lo and behold, here I am, 5 months later and 13 lb lighter, and I'm not hungry anymore.



NAME
Cheryl Parks
**POUNDS
LOST** 25



Butter Diet book: Tahitian Chicken with Peanut Butter Mango Sauce, Cold Peanut Butter Noodles, and Peanut Butter Ice Cream Shake. (See "Check Out the Peanut Butter Diet" on p. 137 to get these and other recipes.)

"This diet was easier than I thought it would be," says Kathy Angel, who, despite extreme job stress and an illness, hung in and lost 6 lb and is now on a delirious downward weight spiral.

A New Fast Food



Job: Emergency room nurse

Age: 44

Exercise: Treadmill, weight training, outdoor walking

Cheryl's job is so jam-packed that she only eats two meals a day and grazes the rest of the time. For din-

ners, she says, a luncheon-size plate really helps with portion control. Cheryl explored lots of the recipes, including the peanut butter pudding and peanut butter waffles. But by far, her favorite was peanut butter oatmeal. "I love it. I could eat it twice a day. It's so good, I feel like I'm cheating."

In mid-diet, Cheryl's job became even more hectic than usual, and then baseball season hit, bringing with it a nightly commitment to cheer for her son's team. That left her about 4 hours for sleep each night. Having a set pattern for eating—knowing what and how much it would be—really helped get her through it and keep on losing. "As long as I have my peanut butter, I'm okay," she smiles. "It's real food that tastes good."

HILMAR (2)

A Peanut Butter Convert

NAME
Stephanie
Peterson

POUNDS
LOST
19



Job: Medical secretary

Age: 45

Exercise: Brisk walking

Stephanie wasn't a peanut butter lover, but she jumped into the diet and was really on a roll, dropping 10 lb the first month. "It

wasn't hard at all," she says. Then an inner ear infection shut down her exercise routine. Next, her "chocolate tooth" sent her weight loss into a mid-diet stall.

But Stephanie was determined. She restarted her program with lunchtime walks and a renewed commitment to keeping her food diary.

She paid closer attention to portions and discovered that salad could taste really good with just a little dressing.

But the big boost? "I love my peanut butter and grape jelly sandwich!" she laughs. Peanut butter had never been part of her standard fare. "But once I tried it for breakfast, I realized how good it was!"



More Fat Fighters

In addition to peanut butter, these other strategies helped the peanut butter dieters shed pounds.

- > Exercising 3 to 5 days per week
- > Keeping a food diary
- > Measuring portions
- > Weighing themselves weekly
- > Snacking on fruit

Cholesterol Success

When I tell people about the Peanut Butter Diet, they say, "I can't do that diet; it'll wreck my cholesterol!" Many people still assume that any food high in fat, such as peanut butter, is bad for the heart.

NAME
Rebecca
Wilson

**POUNDS
LOST** 27

No More Cravings

Job: Designer, dressmaker

Age: 45

Exercise: Brisk walking,
line dancing, weight workouts
before bed

Rebecca is an "earth
mother" who aban-
doned her paying job to

start her own business and move back to the farm—right in the middle of the program. She bakes her own bread, grows her own vegetables, and cooks with plenty of herbs and spices. Peanut butter is her twice-a-day indulgence. For breakfast, it's a shake made from soy milk, peanut butter, banana, and cinnamon or cocoa powder. For dinner, she enjoys one of the recipes from the Peanut Butter Diet book.

The diet helped Rebecca conquer the urge to munch a sleeve of crackers or a couple of candy bars, and that helped her avoid the afternoon slump. "Peanut butter satisfied my craving for both fat and sweet," she says in amazement.

Of course, she's recommended the diet to everyone—parents, sister, friends, and even a few strangers who noticed her weight loss. "I plan to eat this way for the rest of my life," she vows. "I love my peanut butter, and the diet is so easy to follow!"



HILMAR (2)

Today, however, we recognize that it's too much saturated fat—from foods such as premium ice cream and burgers—that sets you up for clogged arteries and heart disease. In contrast, monounsaturated fat (and peanut butter is loaded with it) is actually good for your heart. Groundbreaking studies suggest that for some people, a diet high in monounsaturated fats may even top low-fat, high-carb diets at controlling cholesterol.

So what happened in our group? Mary Blann checked in with a whopping high-risk cholesterol of 246. But she checked out at close to normal: 206.

Paulette Stokes had actually cut her cholesterol from 295 to 235 before the diet began by taking medication. Her doctor was amazed when the diet slashed it even further to 174, and he lowered and switched her blood pressure medication, because her readings dropped to about 118/72. Now that's a diet you can live with!

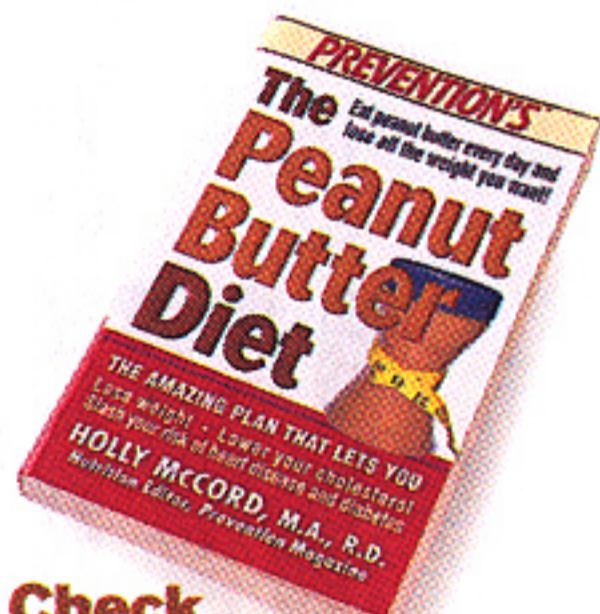
But we also found that for two women, cholesterol levels increased. Cholesterol expert Ronald Krauss, MD, of the University of California, Berkeley, says that's because not everyone responds in the same way to a given diet. So if you start any new eating plan, have your cholesterol checked before you start, then rechecked after 6 weeks. You don't want

your numbers to go above 200. If you do see an increase on the Peanut Butter Diet, cut back to 2 tablespoons of PB a day, and eat more whole grain bread and beans.

Back to PB

Yes, there were days when we wanted a change from peanut butter. So instead, we ate more of other yummy monounsaturated fat foods: olive oil on salads, nuts for snacks, and avocados in sandwiches. I even tried other nut butters: almond, cashew, and soy. But you know what? I kept coming back to my scoop of Skippy Super Chunk twice a day. Here I am, 13 lb lighter and still in love with peanut butter! ☺

Colleen Pierre, RD, is an associate professor of aging, nutrition, and fitness at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and coauthor of *Jerry Baker's Giant Book of Kitchen Counter Cures* (Jerry Baker Books, 2001).



Check Out the Peanut Butter Diet

For more on the Peanut Butter Diet, including meal plans and recipes, go to www.prevention.com. Or look for *Prevention's Peanut Butter Diet* by Nutrition Editor Holly McCord, RD (St. Martin's Press, 2001), \$6.50. Available wherever books are sold.

Our special thanks to John Bielawski, director of the Sports Medicine Center, and Cheryl VanKuren, program manager of Cardiac Rehab & Medical Fitness, both at Baltimore's Union Memorial Hospital, for their help with our program.