

NUTRITION NEWS & NOTES

Sunflower Seeds Deliver A “Winning Team” Of Nutrients

(NAPS)—Here’s news to brighten your day: Sunflower seeds are like a multivitamin—only better, since they deliver many powerful nutrients in a naturally small, flavorful morsel.

Tiny sunflower seeds package an entire “winning team” of hard-to-get nutrients, including 76 percent of the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for vitamin E. In fact, sunflower seeds are the richest whole food source of vitamin E. This is good news since experts generally agree that whole foods are better than supplements because several components work together to prevent disease.

A recent study supports that the vitamin E in foods, but not from supplements, was found to be associated with a lower risk of Alzheimer’s disease. Large-scale clinical studies have failed to confirm that mega-doses of vitamin E in supplemental form are beneficial for health.

Sunflower seeds are loaded with many nutrients that potentially work together. One ounce delivers about 25 percent of daily needs for selenium, a hard-to-get antioxidant that works with vitamin E. Sunflower seeds can also increase dietary folate and magnesium, both lacking in typical American diets and are good sources of copper, iron and zinc. Surprisingly, sunflower seeds even have room for phytochemicals like phenolic acids and lignans that may help prevent heart disease and cancer.

Perhaps better still, almost 90 percent of the fat in sunflower seeds is the healthiest type for the



Snack like a blooming genius: enjoy home-made granola bars packed with healthful sunflower seeds.

heart—“good” unsaturated fat. According to a recent Harvard study, substituting “good” unsaturated fats for saturated and trans fats is one of the most effective diet strategies for preventing coronary heart disease. One easy way to begin this strategy is to sprinkle sunflower seeds as a salad topper, instead of cheese. Sunflower seeds and oil contain both mono- and polyunsaturated fats, are low in saturated fat and do not contribute harmful trans fat to the diet.

Planting the seed for healthier lives may be as simple as using sunflower seeds in a variety of healthful ways. Pack protein into homemade granola bars by substituting sunflower seeds in place of some oats. Coat fish or chicken in crushed sunflower seeds for a nutritious crunch. Sprinkle sunflower seeds into stuffing mixes for a nutty flavor. For more information and recipes, visit www.sunflowernsa.com.