

# US Dry Bean Nutrition News



[www.usdrybeans.com](http://www.usdrybeans.com) [www.beansforhealth.com](http://www.beansforhealth.com)

[www.legumechef.com](http://www.legumechef.com)

Information for the US Dry Bean Nutrition News is taken from the 2014 Spring edition of *Bean Briefs*, the research and analysis newsletter of the US Dry Bean Council, under the direction of the USDBC's Executive Director, Jeane Wharton.

In addition to summarizing articles from scientific peer-reviewed journals, *Bean Briefs* highlights news and research about beans and health.

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## **A review of the nutritional value of legumes and their effects on obesity and its related comorbidities**

Rebello CJ, Greenway FL, Finley JW, *Obesity Reviews* 2014: [Epub ahead of print].

The recent rise in overweight and obesity now threaten to affect three-quarters of Americans by 2020. In this review article, the authors propose that small lifestyle changes are easier and typically more long-lasting than dietary overhauls that cannot be maintained long-term. One of these small changes involves eating more legumes. Research shows that the higher the legume consumption in a population, the lower the average weight of participants. Not only are beans nutritious, versatile, and able to battle weight gain, but they are a familiar low-cost ingredient to a low-income population that has a particular problem with overweight.

Most accepted lifestyle eating plans recommend eating beans, including the Mediterranean and DASH diets. What do beans bring to the table? The researchers exhaustively document all the positive characteristics of beans and other legumes that make them appealing to help battle both weight gain and the diseases that coexist with overweight and obesity.

Because they are high in fiber, beans have a lower energy density (more nutrients for fewer calories) and can improve glycemic response, evening out blood glucose levels.

Fiber also helps boost satiety. Moreover, beans are rich in protein while also being low in fat. They shine in much-needed folate for women, as well as other B vitamins. In addition, they provide important minerals, especially magnesium and potassium, but also iron and calcium. The high potassium benefits blood pressure.



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Phytochemicals abound, including polyphenols, phytic acid, and saponins, which carry anti-oxidant and anti-inflammatory properties.

Research suggests some anti-cancer and cholesterol-lowering potential of certain phytochemicals. Beans are rich in the newly appreciated fiber called resistant starch. This may help body weight management by lowering glycemic response and improving insulin resistance.

### TAKE-HOME BEAN MESSAGE:

The small act of eating more beans not only improves a diet, but helps prevent weight gain. Much of this is attributed to beans' abundance of fiber, particularly resistant starch. People who incorporate beans into meals are likely to be more satisfied, less likely to gain weight, and eating a more nutritious diet that helps keep other conditions at bay.

### Effect of dietary pulses on blood pressure: a systematic review and meta-analysis of controlled feeding trials

Jayalath VH, de Souza RJ, Sievenpiper JL, et al., *American Journal of Hypertension* 2014; 27:56-64.

Research confirms that tackling high blood pressure with diet can lower blood pressure in people with hypertension. The DASH diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension), which includes beans and other legumes, has yielded positive results. In fact, the United States, Canada, and Europe all recommend similar diet and lifestyle changes, including increased bean intake, as primary treatment for high blood pressure. In this study, researchers set out to evaluate data on whether dietary pulses (low-fat beans, peas and lentils), by themselves, can lower blood pressure. The researchers combined the results of eight trials of more than 500 participants, almost half of whom were overweight or obese, and who were followed for a median of 10 weeks. All of the trials substituted pulses calorie-for-calorie in the participants' diets. The results demonstrated that the median intake of 1 2/3 servings daily (slightly less than one cup) significantly lowered systolic blood pressure by 2.25 mm HG in participants with and without hypertension. Why are beans likely to be helpful in lowering blood pressure? The researchers point to beans being high in fiber, potassium, and plant protein, all of which have shown the ability to help lower blood pressure, while also having a low glycemic index and saturated fat content.

### TAKE-HOME BEAN MESSAGE:

Consistently eating a cup of beans a day may be able to make a significant dent in blood pressure, whether someone is hypertensive or pre-hypertensive. This plus other dietary and lifestyle changes might be enough to supplement or replace medi-



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**Edible dry beans grown in the USA**



The United States Dry Bean Council (USDBC) is a private trade association in the United States that represents growers, shippers and end-users of US edible dry beans. The USDBC promotes the use, consumption and marketing of edible dry beans worldwide.



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**ADZUKI BEAN**  
 These are small, reddish brown beans with a nutty, sweet flavor. Adzuki beans are often used in Asian cuisines. They are particularly popular in Japanese cooking where they're used in confections.



**BABY LIMA**  
 Flat-shaped, creamy white-colored beans with a rich, buttery flavor. Baby lima beans are excellent in soups, stews and casseroles or just cooked with herbs and spices.



**BLACK BEAN**  
 Black beans are small ovals with deep black skins. They have cream-colored flesh with a mild, sweet, earthy taste and a soft texture. Sometimes called turtle beans, these beans are used in classic Latin American, Caribbean and Southwestern United States soups, stews and sauces.



**BLACKEYE BEAN**  
 Blackeye beans are characterized by their kidney shaped, white skin with a small black eye and very fine wrinkles. They have a scented aroma, creamy texture and distinctive flavor. Originally from Africa, blackeye beans are also known as cowpeas and black-eyed peas and have rapid cooking potential, with no presoaking needed.



**CRANBERRY BEAN**  
 Cranberry beans are small rounded beans known for their creamy texture with a subtle, nut-like flavor. They are ivory in color with red markings that disappear on cooking. These beans are a favorite in northern Italian, Spanish and Portuguese cuisines.

**DARK RED KIDNEY BEAN**



Large, kidney-shaped bean with a deep reddish-brown color. They have a robust, full bodied flavor and soft texture. Dark red kidney beans are most often used in chili and are also popular in salads and with rice.



**GARBANZO BEAN**  
 Garbanzo beans or chickpeas are usually beige to pale yellow in color with a nutlike taste and buttery texture. The garbanzo bean is especially popular in many Middle Eastern and Indian dishes such as hummus, falafels and curries.



**GREAT NORTHERN BEAN**  
 Great Northerns are flat, kidney-shaped, medium-sized, white beans with a delicate flavor. Great Northern beans take on the flavors of the foods with which they are cooked which is why they are popular in France for making cassoulet (a white bean casserole). In the United States they are traditionally prepared as Boston baked beans.

**LARGE LIMA BEAN**



Sometimes called "butter beans". Large lima beans are flat-shaped, ivory-colored beans with a smooth, creamy, sweet flavor. Used in a popular American side dish called succotash, large limas make a good substitute for potatoes or rice and are excellent in soups and casseroles.



**LIGHT RED KIDNEY BEAN**

Large, kidney-shaped bean with a robust, full-bodied flavor and soft texture. Popular in the Caribbean region as well as Portugal and Spain, the light red kidney beans are most often used in chili, salads and paired with rice.

**NAVY BEAN**



Small white ovals with a mild flavor and powdery texture. Also known as pea beans. Most often used in pork and beans, or baked beans, also used in soups and stews, and are great pureed.



**PINK BEAN**  
 Small, pale, pink-colored beans with a rich, meaty flavor and a slightly powdery texture. Related to the kidney bean, pink beans turn reddish brown when cooked. Pink beans are often used in chili and are a favorite in Old West recipes.

**PINTO BEAN**



Medium-sized, oval-shaped bean with a mottled beige and brown skin, an earthy flavor and a powdery texture. Closely related to red kidney beans. When cooked, pintos lose their mottling and turn brown. They are most often used in refried beans, and are great for Tex-Mex and Mexican bean dishes.



**SMALL RED BEAN**

Dark red color with flavor and properties similar to red kidney, only smaller in size. Also called Mexican red bean, they hold both shape and firmness when cooked. Most often used in soups, salads, chili and Creole dishes.