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New Study Reveals That Canned Beans Significantly Improve Nutrient Intake and Diet Quality in U.S. Adults

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A recently published [study](#)¹ in *Medical Research Archives*, the journal of the European Society of Medicine, demonstrates that replacing commonly consumed protein foods with canned beans (including kidney beans, black beans, chickpeas and pinto beans) significantly increased shortfall nutrient intakes and improved diet quality in adults in the United States. This new research shines a bright light on the benefits of canned beans and adds to the growing body of evidence that showcases the multiple benefits of beans and chickpeas as part of a healthy dietary pattern. The results are being socialized on Monday, October 13th, among the nation's leading authorities on food and nutrition at the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo® 2025.

Using data from *What We Eat in America 2001-2018*, the dietary component of the United States (US) National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), researchers modeled the substitution of protein foods with one and two calorically equal servings of canned beans daily in adults to assess nutrient and diet quality implications. Protein-rich foods were defined as "foods within the USDA protein-foods category (i.e., meats, poultry, eggs, seafood, nuts, seeds and soy products)."

Results showed significantly improved shortfall-nutrient intakes. Specifically, intake of dietary fiber increased by 30% and 51% respectively, with replacement of protein foods with one and two of canned beans, relative to the US typical dietary pattern; intake of iron, magnesium, potassium and folate increased in the range of approximately 6-7% and 10-13%. Additionally, overall diet quality was improved. Total diet quality, as measured by The Healthy Eating Index 2015 scores, was 12% and 15% relative to the US typical dietary pattern. The study was funded by Cannedbeans.org, on behalf of Bush's Best®.

"What could be an easier diet upgrade than opening a can of beans?" states author Yanni Papanikolaou, of Nutritional Strategies Inc. "Canned beans are the simple swap that can improve American diets. Plus, they are extremely affordable, always in season and ready to use, not to mention versatile and delicious."

The body of evidence over the years shines a bright light on the nutritional benefits of beans. Studies show the inclusion of pulses (beans, chickpeas, peas and lentils) as part of a healthy diet imparts countless health benefits, such as: cardiovascular, metabolic, and gut protective effects; improved weight outcomes and reduction in low-grade inflammation; and a potential role in immune-related disease risk management.² Pulses are an excellent source of plant protein, fiber, folate and potassium and serve as a rich source of minerals (zinc, iron, calcium, magnesium) and are therefore vital in diets that prioritize plant-based sources of nutrients.^{3,4,5,6} This is the first study specific to canned beans, which is significant since 94% of the beans purchased at retail are canned beans, according to Nielsen Consumer LLC. Canning safely locks in the inherent nutritional value of beans and chickpeas,⁷ preserving their plant-based protein, fiber, and micronutrients without the need for added preservatives or refrigeration, making them both a sustainable and nutritious pantry staple.

Research also shows that beans and chickpeas are among the most inexpensive sources of protein when compared to animal proteins. Moreover, canned beans and chickpeas are shelf-stable, reducing food waste and saving consumers money. It is estimated that up to 40% of the US food supply is wasted,⁸ costing the average family of four nearly \$3,000 annually. Convenient, shelf-stable, and affordable foods, like canned beans and chickpeas, deliver essential nutrients that are not only delicious but affordable.

In its recent report,⁹ the 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC) proposed increasing the weekly recommendation for beans, peas, lentils, and chickpeas from 1.5 to 2.5 cups per week in the next edition of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. "We know that eating beans is good for so many reasons. Eating more is even better," said Yanni Papanikolaou. "If Americans follow this recommendation, this change has the potential to catalyze a significant shift in dietary patterns and make a profound impact on their health."

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ABOUT CANNEDBEANS.ORG

Cannedbeans.org, sponsored by Bush's Best®, is a category-building marketing campaign aimed at promoting the universal health benefits of canned beans regardless of brand. Containing fiber, protein and iron, canned beans make it easy to add more plants to your diet and help people live longer, healthier lives. For more information, check out the latest tools, recipes, and resources below to learn more about the benefits of canned beans at www.cannedbeans.org.