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7 Incredible Health Benefits of Strawberries

You've heard it before, no doubt: Berries are nature's candy. And strawberries-with their perfect pop-in-your-mouth shape, sweet flavor, and bright pink-red color-are possibly the most enjoyable of them all.

But for being deemed sweet like candy, these little gems pack a solid health punch too: "Strawberries are one of the healthiest fruits out there," says Ilana Muhlstein, R.D., creator of Beachbody's 2B Mindset healthy eating plan. But what, exactly, punts them to the top of the fruit pyramid? Read on to see all the health benefits that strawberries offer-you'll want to nom a carton of them immediately, guaranteed.



1. They're low in sugar and high in fiber.

"Like other berries, they are lower in sugar and calories and higher in fiber than most fruits." A cup of strawberries is only about 50 calories, has 8g of sugar, and 3g of fiber. Considering you should get about 25g of fiber per day, berries offer a pretty solid source of this important nutrient.

2. They're a killer source of vitamin C.

When you want to load up on vitamin C, you may reach straight for the OJ-but you should be noshing on strawberries instead. "In fact, strawberries have more vitamin C per serving than oranges," says Muhlstein. One cup of sliced strawberries has about 97mg of vitamin C-110 percent of your recommended daily value-while a cup of orange sections has 83mg, says Manuel Villacorta, M.S., R.D., author of Whole Body Reboot.

3. They're anti-inflammatory.

"Strawberries have anti-inflammatory properties due to their vast array of phytonutrients including anthocyanins, ellagitannins, terpenoids, flavonols, and phenolic acids," says Keri Glassman, R.D. FYI, phytonutrients is a broad name for plant compounds that are believed to have beneficial effects on the human body. "These antioxidants help to eliminate free radicals and assist in your body's natural detoxification process," says Glassman. Research backs it up: In a study of obese adults with knee osteoarthritis, participants who consumed about 50g of freeze-dried strawberries daily reported lower pain scores after 12 weeks, and a review of strawberry research found that they suppress the production of pro-inflammatory proteins and increased the production of anti-inflammatory proteins.

4. They help prevent disease.

Strawberries' high phytonutrient levels-and thus their anti-inflammatory nature-make them a great healthy diet choice for preventing diseases. "Strawberries are rich in flavonoids, folate, and anthocyanins, which have been correlated with improved heart and brain health," says Muhlstein. One study published in the Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism found that when obese adults consumed strawberries daily for 12 weeks, they showed increased antioxidant capacity and levels of the antioxidant glutathione, which may help reduce the risk of obesity-related conditions, such as cardiovascular disease, metabolic syndrome, and type 2 diabetes. Another study published in the Journal of Nutrition found that consuming strawberries daily can help reduce total cholesterol levels-thus reducing your risk of heart disease, heart attack, and stroke.

5. They keep your brain sharp.

Brain foods are a real thing-and strawberries are one of them. A recent study published in the Annals of Neurology suggests that eating strawberries more than twice a week appears to delay cognitive aging by up to 2.5 years.

6. They play well with other foods.

For vegans and vegetarians, strawberries can be an important addition to any meal. "Without meat as a source of iron, many vegans supplement their diets with plant-based, iron-containing foods like spinach and quinoa," says Villacorta. "The iron found in plant-based foods is called non-heme iron, and it's not as readily available for our bodies to absorb as the heme iron that's found in meat. Luckily, vitamin C significantly boosts the body's ability to absorb this non-heme iron." What that means: Vegans and vegetarians can try eating strawberries with foods that are good sources of iron to boost absorption, he says. You can also pair strawberries with an egg to make the perfect snack. "Snack on a cup of strawberries with a hard-boiled egg for the ideal combo of carb, protein, fat, fiber," says Glassman.

7. They make you happy—really.

Whether strawberries make you think of summer strawberry shortcake, refreshing fruit salad, or romantic chocolate-covered berries, the memories you have with the fruit are likely positive. In a survey of 1,000 people conducted in 2016 for Driscoll's, strawberries evoked the most feelings of happiness compared to other produce. Specifically, 95 percent of people surveyed said that berries bring up thoughts of summertime and happy memories, brighten ordinary moments, or add a spark of joy to their day.

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