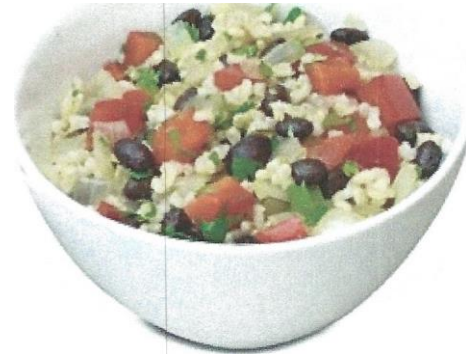


Five good reasons to eat beans

David Schardt November 14, 2016 Nutrition Action Newsletter
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Why the fuss over beans? And by beans, we also mean peas, lentils, and other legumes. We can think of five "beanefits" to start with.

1. They're packed with fiber, potassium, magnesium, folate, and iron. These are nutrients a lot of people don't get enough of.
2. Cholesterol. Beans lower LDL ("bad") cholesterol, probably because they're rich in the gummy, soluble type of fiber that does that.
3. Blood pressure. Beans help lower blood pressure, possibly because they're a decent source of potassium. Bonus: their magnesium may help prevent type 2 diabetes.
4. Regularity. Beans contain less water than fruits and vegetables, which makes them a more concentrated source of fiber. Expect 6 or 7 grams of fiber in half a cup of most beans. The same amount of most veggies or fruits has 1 to 3 grams. Don't worry that some brands of, say, black beans seem to have less fiber than others. The different numbers on the labels are largely due to different laboratory tests, not differences in the beans.
5. Plant protein. Beans are rich in protein. Getting your protein from beans instead of from red meat like beef or pork can help lower your risk of colorectal cancer, heart disease, and type 2 diabetes. It also helps fight climate change.



That was four diseases: heart disease, hypertension, colorectal cancer, and . diabetes. Five if you count constipation.

On the downside:

Beans contain oligosaccharides, carbs that our digestive enzymes can't break down. Instead, bacteria in our gut ferment them and produce gas.

Solution: cook beans thoroughly (or use canned), rinse away liquids, and increase your servings gradually. If all else fails, try Beano, an enzyme that breaks down the oligosaccharides for you.