

10 Surprising Health Benefits and Uses of Peaches



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Peaches — or *Prunus persica* — are small fruit with a fuzzy peel and a sweet white or yellow flesh.

They're thought to have originated in China more than 8,000 years ago (1).

Peaches are related to plums, apricots, cherries, and almonds. They're considered drupes or stone fruit because their flesh surrounds a shell that houses an edible seed.

They can be eaten on their own or added to a variety of dishes. What's more, peaches are nutritious and may offer an array of health benefits, including improved digestion, smoother skin, and allergy relief.

Here are 10 surprising health benefits and uses of peaches.



1. Packed With Nutrients and Antioxidants

Peaches are rich in many vitamins, minerals, and beneficial plant compounds.

One medium-sized peach (5.4 ounces or 150 grams) provides approximately (2):

- **Calories:** 58
- **Protein:** 1 gram
- **Fat:** less than 1 gram
- **Carbs:** 14 grams
- **Fiber:** 2 grams
- **Vitamin C:** 17% of the Daily Value (DV)
- **Vitamin A:** 10% of the DV
- **Potassium:** 8% of the DV
- **Niacin:** 6% of the DV
- **Vitamin E:** 5% of the DV
- **Vitamin K:** 5% of the DV
- **Copper:** 5% of the DV
- **Manganese:** 5% of the DV

Peaches also offer smaller amounts of [magnesium](#), phosphorus, iron, and some B vitamins.

In addition, they're packed with [antioxidants](#) — beneficial plant compounds that combat oxidative damage and help protect your body against aging and disease. The fresher and riper the fruit, the more antioxidants it contains (3, 4, 5, 6).

In one study, juice from fresh peaches demonstrated antioxidant actions in healthy men within 30 minutes of consumption (7).

Fresh and canned peaches seem to have similar amounts of vitamins and minerals — as long as canned varieties are unpeeled (8, 9).

However, fresh peaches have higher levels of antioxidants and appear to be more effective at protecting against oxidative damage than canned ones (9, 10).

SUMMARY

Peaches are high in fiber, vitamins, and minerals. They also contain beneficial plant compounds like antioxidants, which can help protect your body from aging and disease.

2. May Aid Digestion

Peaches may contribute to healthy digestion.

One medium-sized fruit provides about 2 grams of fiber — half of which is soluble fiber, while the other half is insoluble (2, 11).

Insoluble fiber adds bulk to your stool and helps move food through your gut, reducing the likelihood of [constipation](#) (12).

On the other hand, soluble fiber provides food for beneficial bacteria in your intestines. In turn, these bacteria produce short-chain fatty acids — such as acetate, propionate, and butyrate — which feed the cells of your gut.

[Short-chain fatty acids](#) in your gut may also help reduce inflammation and improve symptoms of digestive disorders like Crohn's disease, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), and ulcerative colitis (13, 14, 15).

Peach flowers are another part of the fruit that may benefit digestion. They're commonly used in traditional Chinese medicine to treat digestive disorders.

Animal research shows that compounds found in the flowers may effectively increase the strength and frequency of gut contractions, which helps maintain the proper rhythm to push food along smoothly (16).

While studies often use peach flower extract, an herbal tea made from the flowers is commonly consumed in Korea (17).

SUMMARY

Peaches contain fiber, which contributes to smooth digestion and a lower risk of gut disorders. Peach flowers also provide certain compounds that appear to support a healthy gut.

3. May Improve Heart Health

Regularly eating fruit — including peaches — may promote [heart health](#).

Peaches may lower risk factors for heart disease, such as high blood pressure and cholesterol levels ([18](#)).

What's more, test-tube studies show that peaches may bind to bile acids — compounds produced by your liver from cholesterol.

The bound bile acids — together with the cholesterol they contain — are eventually excreted through your feces, which may help [lower blood cholesterol](#) levels ([19](#)).

Additional test-tube and animal studies found that peaches may reduce total and "bad" LDL cholesterol levels, as well as blood pressure and triglyceride levels ([20](#), [21](#), [22](#)).

Research in obese rats further reported that peach juice may lower levels of the hormone angiotensin II that raises blood pressure ([22](#), [23](#)).

While these effects seem promising, more studies are needed to confirm them in humans.

SUMMARY

Peaches contain compounds that may help reduce risk factors for heart disease, such as high blood pressure, as well as triglyceride and cholesterol levels. However, more studies in humans are needed.

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4. May Protect Your Skin

Peaches may have protective effects that help keep your [skin healthy](#).

Test-tube studies indicate that compounds found in peaches may improve your skin's ability to retain moisture — thus improving skin texture (24).

What's more, both test-tube and animal studies show that extracts made from peach flowers or flesh applied directly to the skin may help prevent UV damage (25, 26, 27).

Peach flower extracts were also found to delay the development of skin tumors in mice (28).

However, more research in humans is needed before conclusions can be drawn.

SUMMARY

Compounds in peaches and peach flowers may help keep your skin healthy by maintaining moisture and protecting against sun damage. However, more research is needed.

5. May Prevent Certain Types of Cancer

Like most fruits, peaches provide beneficial plant compounds that may offer some protection against various cancers.

Specifically, peach skin and flesh are rich in carotenoids and caffeic acid — two types of antioxidants found to have [anticancer properties](#) (29, 30, 31, 32).

Test-tube and animal research has also shown that compounds in peach seeds may limit the growth of non-cancerous skin tumors and prevent them from turning into cancerous ones (33).

Not to mention, peaches are full of polyphenols — a category of antioxidants shown to reduce the growth and limit the spreading of cancer cells in test-tube studies (34).

Peach polyphenols may have the ability to kill cancerous cells as well, without causing any damage to healthy ones (35).

In one animal study, these polyphenols were particularly effective at preventing a specific type of breast cancer from growing and spreading.

Researchers reported that a person would need to eat about two to three peaches a day to consume an amount of polyphenols equivalent to that used in the study (34).

In another study, postmenopausal women who consumed at least 2 peaches or nectarines each day had a 41% lower risk of breast [cancer](#) over 24 years (36).

However, few studies have been done in humans, so more research is needed.

SUMMARY

Compounds found in peaches may offer some protection against cancer by limiting the formation, growth, and spread of cancerous cells. However, more studies are needed to confirm these benefits.

6. May Reduce Allergy Symptoms

Peaches may reduce allergy symptoms.

When your body is exposed to an allergen, it releases histamines, or chemicals made by your immune system to help rid your body of the allergen.

Histamines are part of your body's defense system and trigger allergy symptoms like sneezing, itching, or coughing.

Research shows that peaches may help reduce allergy symptoms by preventing the release of histamines in the blood (37).

Moreover, test-tube studies report that peach extracts may be effective as well and limit the inflammation commonly seen in allergic reactions (38, 39).

However, more research is needed to determine the strength of these effects in people with [allergies](#).

SUMMARY

Peaches may help lower your immune system's response to allergens, thus reducing allergy symptoms. However, more studies — particularly in humans — are needed.

7–9. Other Potential Benefits

Peaches may offer several other health benefits. The most well-researched include:

7. **May boost immunity:** Peaches are rich in immune-boosting nutrients and antioxidants. Test-tube studies report that they may also fight certain types of bacteria (40).
8. **May protect against certain toxins:** In one study, peach extracts given to smokers increased the removal of nicotine through the urine (41).
9. **May reduce blood sugar levels:** Studies show that compounds found in peaches may help prevent high [blood sugar levels](#) and insulin resistance in obese rats (22).

That said, these studies were small, and most of these benefits have not been observed in humans.

SUMMARY

Peaches may boost immunity, rid the body of toxins, and reduce blood sugar levels. However, research in these areas is limited.

10. Widely Available and Easy to Add to Your Diet

Peaches are easy to find and can be added to your diet in many ways.

They can be eaten raw, baked, grilled, broiled, or sautéed and are easily incorporated into warm or cold dishes alike.

For instance, fresh peaches make a great nutrient-rich snack and can be eaten either on their own or topped with yogurt and a handful of [nuts](#).

Peaches can be [added to salads](#) or stirred into a hearty chickpea curry. They add an unexpected touch to salsa and are also a popular ingredient in many desserts.

Lastly, peaches can be blended into a smoothie or gently mashed to add flavor to your water.

SUMMARY

Peaches are widely available and can be eaten in a variety of ways. Enjoy them on their own or easily incorporate them into main dishes, sides, smoothies, or desserts.

How to Select and Store Peaches

Peaches come in a wide range of varieties — some white, others yellow. White peaches are sweeter, while yellow ones tend to be more tart.

When selecting peaches, typically the sweeter their smell, the riper they will be. Try to avoid brownish, bruised, or wrinkled fruits, which are either damaged or overripe. Instead, look for peaches with a hard or only slightly soft flesh.

You can tell a peach is ripe and ready to eat when you press down on its flesh and feel it slightly give.

Peaches continue to ripen after they're picked. So if your peaches are too firm, try setting them on your countertop in a single layer for one to three days.

Ripe peaches last about one week at room temperature. If you don't plan to eat them within this timeframe, it's best to store them in your refrigerator to avoid over-ripening.

Ripe peaches can also be frozen, but it's best to first slice them and coat their flesh with a bit of lemon juice to avoid browning.

Peaches can be purchased canned or [frozen](#) as well. Keep in mind that canned peaches tend to contain fewer antioxidants than fresh or frozen peaches, and for a healthier choice, try opting for a variety packed in water instead of syrup ([9](#), [10](#)).

SUMMARY

It's best to purchase fresh peaches that are either under-ripe or slightly ripe. Fresh peaches are the most nutritious, followed by frozen and then canned. If buying canned, it's best to choose a variety packed in water without added sugars.

The Bottom Line

Peaches are rich in many vitamins, minerals, and beneficial plant compounds.

They're easily incorporated into a variety of dishes and may offer impressive health benefits, including healthier skin, fewer allergy symptoms, and [improved digestion](#) and heart health.

Peaches also appear to be linked to a lower risk of certain cancers and may boost immunity, protect against toxins, and lower blood sugar levels.

All in all, it's a fruit well worth adding to your diet.

HEALTHLINE CHALLENGES

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