

15 Surprising Health Benefits of Apples That'll Have You Eating One (Or More) A Day

Sometimes the simplest foods are the best foods.



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What exactly are the health benefits of apples?

You don't have to be a nutritionist to realize that apples are healthy. Not only do they come in their own packaging – meaning you can eat the skin – they are also full of healthy nutrients. The healthy reason to eat them are endless but we have ranked the top 15 benefits of apples. (We also ranked the benefits of mushrooms, too!) So what makes apples so healthy? The nutritional profile. In 2004, the USDA scientists investigated over 100 foods to measure their antioxidant concentration per serving size. Two types of apples — **Red Delicious** and **Granny Smith** — ranked 12th and 13th respectively. Antioxidants are disease-fighting compounds. Scientists believe these compounds help prevent and repair oxidation damage that happens during normal

cell activity. Apples are also full of a fibre called pectin — a medium-sized apple offers about four grams of fibre. Pectin is classed as a soluble, fermentable and viscous fibre, a combination that gives apples a huge list of health benefits.

1. Whiter, healthier teeth

Apples won't replace your toothbrush, but biting and chewing an apple stimulates the production of saliva in your mouth, reducing tooth decay by lowering the levels of bacteria. This is the single thing that causes most teeth issues.

2. Avoid Alzheimer's

A **study** on the benefits of apples shows that drinking apple juice could keep Alzheimer's away and fight the effects of aging on the brain. The mice in the study that were fed an apple-enhanced diet showed higher levels of the neurotransmitter acetylcholine and did better in maze tests than those on a regular diet.

3. Protect against Parkinson's

Research has shown that people who eat fruits and other high-fibre foods (ahem, apples) may be protected against Parkinson's disease, a condition characterized by a breakdown of the brain's dopamine-producing nerve cells. Scientists have linked this to the free radical-fighting power of the antioxidants contained therein.

4. Curb all sorts of cancers

Scientists from the American Association for Cancer Research, among others, agree that the consumption of flavonol-rich apples could help reduce your risk of developing pancreatic cancer by up to 23 percent. Researchers at Cornell University have identified several compounds — triterpenoids — in apple peel that have potent anti-growth activities against cancer cells in the liver, colon and breast. Their earlier research found that extracts from whole apples can reduce the number and size of mammary tumours in rats. Meanwhile, the National Cancer Institute in the U.S. has recommended a high fibre intake to reduce the risk of colorectal cancer. These are the 10 cancer myths you need to stop believing stat.

5. Decrease your risk of diabetes

Women who eat apples — at least one a day — are 28 percent less likely to develop type 2 diabetes than those who don't eat apples. The reason this is a health benefit of apples is because this fruit is loaded with soluble fibre, the key to blunting blood sugar swings.

6. Reduce cholesterol

The soluble fibre found in apples binds with fats in the intestine, which translates into lower cholesterol levels and a healthier you.

7. Get a healthier heart

An extensive body of research has linked high soluble fibre intake with a slower buildup of cholesterol-rich plaque in arteries. The phenolic compound found in apple skins also prevents the cholesterol that gets into your system from solidifying on your artery walls. When plaque builds inside your arteries, it reduces blood flow to your heart, leading to coronary artery disease. Ever wonder what sex does to your heart? You're about to find out.

8. Prevent gallstones

This is one of the apple benefit is eye opening. Gallstones form when there's too much cholesterol in your bile for it to remain as a liquid, so it solidifies. They are particularly prevalent in the obese. To prevent gallstones, doctors recommend a diet high in fibre (ahem, apples again) to help you control your weight and cholesterol levels.

9. Beat diarrhea and constipation

Whether you can't go to the bathroom or you just can't stop, fibre found in apples can help. Fibre can either pull water out of your colon to keep things moving along when you're backed up, or absorb excess water from your stool to slow your bowels down. Did you know your poop can tell you lots about your health?

10. Neutralize irritable bowel syndrome

Irritable bowel syndrome is characterized by constipation, diarrhea, and abdominal pain and bloating. To control these symptoms doctors recommend staying away from dairy and fatty foods. And people with IBS understand all too well how food can make symptoms worse, but learning about high-fibre foods they can eat (like apples) is key. Find out if you are wasting your money on the wrong probiotics.

11. Prevent hemorrhoids

Hemorrhoids are a swollen vein in the anal canal and while not life threatening, these veins can be very painful. They are caused by too much pressure in the pelvic and rectal areas. Part and parcel with controlling constipation, fibre can prevent you from straining too much when going to the bathroom and thereby help alleviate hemorrhoids. Here comes the benefits of apples again: apples are a great source of fibre which can help keep you regular. A healthy digestive system means a healthy body.

12. Control your weight

This is one of the health benefits of apples most of us are willing to get. Many health problems are associated with being overweight, among them heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and sleep apnea. To manage weight and improve overall health, doctors

recommend a diet rich in fibre. Foods high in fibre — like apples — will fill you up without costing you too many calories.

13. Detoxify your liver

Your liver is responsible for clearing these toxins out of your body. Many doctors are skeptical of fad detox diets, saying they have the potential to do more harm than good. Luckily, one of the best – and easiest – things you can eat to help detoxify your liver is fruits, like apples. This is everything you need to know before you even think about doing a detox.

14. Boost your immune system

Red apples contain an antioxidant called quercetin. Recent studies have found that quercetin can help boost and fortify your immune system, especially when you're stressed out. That's one of the most unexpected health benefits of apples.

15. Prevent cataracts

Though past studies have been divided on the issue, recent long-term studies suggest that people who have a diet rich in fruits that contain antioxidants — like apples — are 10 to 15 percent less likely to develop cataracts. So, as you can see, apple benefits are endless!