

Avocados



Avocados Benefits

*An avocado is a fruit that comes from the tree of the same name (*Persea americana*). Avocados are sometimes called Alligator Pears. Avocados and avocado oil offer a number of health benefits. It is estimated that avocados have been around since 10,000 BC. They are native to Central Mexico, but they are now grown in Mediterranean and Tropical climates all over the world.*

Health Benefits of Avocados

Avocados and avocado oil may offer a number of health benefits:

Prostate Cancer

Prostate cancer is a common concern for men who are over the age of 65. It is estimated that there are over 238,000 new cases of prostate cancer each year. Researchers have found that there are compounds in avocados that can inhibit the growth of cancerous cells in the prostate.

Protect Against Breast Cancer

Avocados contain **oleic acid**. Oleic acid has been shown to kill breast cancer in laboratory studies.

Reduce The Risk of Heart Disease

Avocados are an excellent source of **folate**. Folate is one of the nutrients that helps keep the heart healthy. Studies have shown that people who follow a diet that is rich in folate are much less likely to develop heart disease.

Avocados also help **lower cholesterol**. High cholesterol is one of the major risk factors for heart disease. There was a study done on patients who had mildly elevated cholesterol. The subjects followed a diet plan that included avocados. The results of the study showed that the subjects total cholesterol had decreased by an average of 17 percent in just seven days. The subjects' LDL, or bad cholesterol, had decreased by an average of 22 percent.

High blood pressure, which affects around 30 percent of the adult population, is another problem that increases the risk of heart disease. Avocados are filled with **potassium**. Potassium is a mineral that helps **reduce blood pressure**. Furthermore, avocados contain **vitamin E** and **glutathione**, and both of those nutrients have been shown to protect against heart disease.

Help Prevent Stroke

Studies have shown that people who eat a diet that is rich in avocados are less likely to have a stroke than those who do not. Experts believe that the folate in avocados helps reduce the risk of stroke.

Reduce The Risk of Birth Defects

Women who are expecting could make avocados a regular part of their diet. Folate that has been shown to protect against birth defects such as spina bifida.

Healthy Eyes

Avocados contain more **lutein** than any other fruit. Lutein is a carotenoid that has been shown to protect against cataracts and macular degeneration. Those are two damaging eye conditions that are very common in older people.

Healthy Skin

Avocados are packed with antioxidants. These antioxidants help protect against free radical damage. Free radicals are compounds that have can speed up the aging process. Avocados also help provide nourishment for the skin and give it a healthy glow. That is why avocado oil is found in many cosmetics.

Improve The Absorption of Other Nutrients

Not only are avocados packed with healthy nutrients, but they can also help the body absorb the nutrients that are found in other foods. There was a study done where participants were asked to eat salad. One group of participants ate a regular salad while the other group

ate a salad that contained avocados. The results of the study showed that the subjects who ate their salads with avocados absorbed five times more carotenoids. This is to be expected as fats help the body absorb fat-soluble **vitamins** and other nutrients, so it is ideal to include a small amount of "good fats" with every meal.

Avocado Oil

The oil from avocados is available in the form of a supplement and can also be used for cooking. Additionally, many people apply the oil directly to their skin to treat various ailments.

Avocado Nutritional Values

High, Good Fat Content

Avocados have a much higher fat content than most other fruits. This is good, monounsaturated fat so don't let this put you off eating avocados. Around 75% of the calories in an avocado are from fat.

High Potassium

On average, 100g avocado has 485mg potassium compared to that of bananas (358 mg) which are known for high potassium content.

High Fiber - both soluble and insoluble

Avocados have a high fiber content. 75% of this is insoluble and 25% soluble fiber.

Insoluble fibers are good for the gut as they act as laxatives and also add bulk so help prevent constipation. They don't dissolve in water so pass straight through the body and just help move everything along.

Soluble fibers absorb water and form a gel, which then helps keep the food digesting for longer, making you feel full for longer therefore reducing hunger and also giving the body more time to absorb nutrients from the food. In addition, keeping food in the stomach for longer seems to affect blood sugar levels and insulin sensitivity. It probably stops the sugar spike then drop by stabilising release over a longer period. Slowing digestion also seems to reduce the absorption of LDL (bad) cholesterol.

Avocados are also packed with **B vitamins**, vitamin E and **vitamin K**.