

Health Benefits of Fruit – Dancing For The Dream Health Tip

Fruits are "juicy foods" that are made up of at least 75 percent water. But all that water doesn't crowd out their vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and fiber.

Fruit is a high-quality carbohydrate that is rich in vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and fiber. The fiber in fruit comes in two forms — soluble and insoluble — and it can be a big help when it comes to [weight loss](#).



The soluble fiber in fruit stabilizes blood sugar, keeps you feeling full, controls your hunger, and it may also lower cholesterol and blood pressure. Plus, it helps to temper blood sugars by slowing the absorption of carbohydrates into your bloodstream after meals, which can reduce your risk of type 2 diabetes and help keep your mood and energy levels steady. Insoluble fiber adds bulk to your food so you can eat more of it without adding extra calories.

You can also think of fruits as “juicy foods,” since they’re mostly made up of water. Fresh and frozen fruit and other foods that have a high water content tend to be low in calories, since all that water adds volume and dilutes the calories. The high fiber and water content in fresh fruit helps fill you up for a minimal calorie cost, making whole fruit a smart addition to any weight-loss plan. The water contained in fruit, like the water you drink, hydrates your cells, flushes toxins from your body, assists with normal organ functioning, and helps you maintain optimal energy levels.

Fruit is especially beneficial for people fighting cardiovascular disease, as research suggests a diet rich in fruits and vegetables helps reduce the risk of heart attack, stroke, and coronary artery disease. Heads up — if you’re taking any cardiac medications (or any other medications, for that matter), it’s important to check with your physician or pharmacist to see if any of your meds interact with grapefruit. Compounds in grapefruit and grapefruit juice can affect how certain medications are absorbed and metabolized, so you’ll need to avoid grapefruit completely if directed by a health-care professional.

Common nutrients in fruit include beta-carotene, beta-cryptoxanthin, foliate, vitamins B6, C, and E, potassium, anthocyanins, and quercetin.

Beta-carotene is an antioxidant that’s critical for [skin health](#). After you eat fruit that contains beta-carotene, your body converts some of the beta-carotene into vitamin A. In its new form, this nutrient aids in the growth and repair of skin tissue, helps protect your skin from the sun’s harmful ultraviolet rays, and keeps your **hair** strong and healthy. Vitamin A may also help guard against macular degeneration. Another carotene found in fruit, beta-cryptoxanthin, may decrease the risk of developing inflammatory conditions, including certain types of [arthritis](#).

B vitamins like foliate and B6 may contribute to heart health, healthy hair, and improved memory. Folate also contributes to the production of serotonin, and therefore, it may help with depression and improve mood. Vitamin B6 also helps create dopamine, which may reduce PMS symptoms.

Vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant that is largely responsible for the health of collagen, a protein that helps maintain healthy skin and cartilage. Vitamin C occurs naturally in the skin, and regularly consuming vitamin C-rich fruits can help replenish your skin’s vitamin C stores and enhance the skin’s natural beauty. Vitamin C aids in joint flexibility, promotes [healthy hair](#), and may slow bone loss and decrease the risk of fractures. Vitamin C may also help prevent cataracts and macular degeneration.

Vitamin E works with vitamin C to provide anti-aging skin protection. In addition, vitamin E may help protect the skin against sun damage and fend off cataracts and macular degeneration.

Fruits high in potassium help prevent osteoporosis by decreasing bone resorption, thus preserving bone density as you age. Eating potassium-rich fruit can also help keep blood pressure low.

Fruits are also rich sources of antioxidants, including anthocyanins, potent disease-fighting compounds that give blue, purple, and red fruits their color, and quercetin, an antioxidant with anti-inflammatory activity. Current research suggests that anthocyanins and quercetin may help slow the rate of age-related [memory-loss](#) and protect against [arthritis](#) and other inflammatory conditions.

When it comes to fruit, there is one important caveat: Fruit is higher in calories and sugar than nonstarchy vegetables (nonstarchy vegetables include broccoli, cauliflower, bell peppers, mushrooms, etc.), so you still need to watch your calories and be careful not to overeat fruit. Aim for two to four servings of fresh fruit daily, and limit your intake of calorie-laden fruit juices.

People with celiac disease should note that while fresh fruit in general does not contain any gluten (making fruit acceptable for a celiac diet), dates and figs may be dusted with wheat flour to make them less sticky and so may need to be avoided; check package labels carefully. While the soluble fiber in fruit often eases IBS symptoms, certain fruits may trigger IBS discomfort. Additionally, some fruits are common migraine triggers, especially citrus fruits and dried fruits with sulfites added as a preservative. See info below.

Apples

There's a reason why apples are so popular — they're delicious and good for you! They have a high water content and more soluble fiber than most fruits, which make them a terrific choice if you're trying to lose weight or have high cholesterol, type 2 diabetes, or IBS. Apples with red skin are especially high in antioxidants that can help manage arthritis pain and slow memory loss. If you get migraine headaches, be aware that red-skinned apples are a possible trigger, but yellow- and green-skinned varieties are a safe bet.

Applesauce

Unsweetened, natural applesauce can be part of a healthy diet. Unfortunately, many types of applesauce that you find on grocery-store shelves contain sugar or high-fructose corn syrup, which increases the calories and sugar. Fresh apples are always best because they have more fiber and nutrients, but if you love applesauce, unsweetened or "natural" will be your best bet. If you have diarrhea-predominant IBS, applesauce may be a good choice during flare-ups since it's easy on your stomach and provides virtually no fiber.

Apricots

Fresh apricots have a high water content and are a good source of soluble fiber, making them a fine choice if you're trying to lose weight or have high cholesterol or type 2 diabetes. They are also a very good source of antioxidants that help reduce the risk of arthritis and macular degeneration, in addition to helping maintain healthy skin and hair. The potassium in apricots helps lower blood pressure and the risk of osteoporosis. Dried apricots often contain added sulfites, a potential migraine trigger, so read labels carefully if you suffer from migraines.

Bananas

Bananas are an easy grab-and-go fruit with a good amount of fiber, which can help with weight loss, heart disease, and type 2 diabetes; potassium, a mineral that helps lower blood pressure and the risk of

osteoporosis, and vitamin B6, which can help reduce PMS symptoms and contribute to healthy hair. Bananas also make a great bedtime snack for people who have insomnia, since they are a low-protein/high-carb food that helps produce serotonin, a sleep-promoting chemical.

Cantaloupe

Cantaloupe, like other melons, has a high water content, making it a great choice for people who are trying to lose weight. It is also a very good source of beta-carotene and vitamin C, antioxidants found in many fruits that help prevent arthritis, cataracts, and macular degeneration, in addition to helping maintain healthy hair and skin. The potassium in cantaloupe also helps lower blood pressure and the risk of osteoporosis.

Cherries

Cherries are members of the stone-fruit family and are in season in the summer. They are a good source of beta-carotene and anthocyanins, antioxidants found in many fruits that help prevent and manage arthritis, cataracts, macular degeneration, and memory loss, as well as maintain healthy hair and skin. Like most fruit, cherries also contain high-quality carbohydrates and are made up of mostly water, making them a good addition to a weight-loss plan.

Clementines

Clementines are a variety of mandarin oranges, smaller than navel oranges and easier to peel and eat. Like oranges, clementines are a good source of vitamin C, an antioxidant found in many fruits that helps prevent and manage arthritis, cataracts, macular degeneration, and maintain healthy hair and skin. Because clementines and other citrus fruits are possible triggers for IBS and migraine headaches avoid them if they are problematic for you.

Dates

Dates, typically sold as a dried fruit, contain a lot of soluble fiber, which helps to lower cholesterol and promote regularity. If you have type 2 diabetes or are trying to lose weight, it is best to limit your intake of dates and other dried fruit because of the higher sugar and calorie concentration compared with that found in fresh fruit. Dried dates may also contain added sulfites, a possible migraine trigger, and they may be dusted with wheat flour to prevent stickiness, so check package labels carefully if you have celiac disease.

Figs

Figs can be found fresh or dried. Both types are good sources of soluble fiber, which helps to lower cholesterol and promote regularity. If you have type 2 diabetes or are trying to lose weight, it is best to limit your intake of dried figs and other dried fruit because of the higher sugar and calorie concentration compared with that found in fresh fruit. Dried figs may also contain added sulfites, a possible migraine trigger, and they may be dusted with wheat flour to prevent stickiness, so check package labels carefully if you have celiac disease.

Grapefruit

Grapefruit is a citrus fruit with a high water content and a good amount of fiber, making it a great choice for people who are trying to lose weight or prevent or manage heart disease or type 2 diabetes. All grapefruits are a good source of vitamin C, and red and pink grapefruits also offer up a high dose of beta-carotene. Vitamin C and beta-carotene are antioxidants found in many fruits that help prevent arthritis, cataracts, and macular degeneration as well as help maintain healthy hair and skin. Because grapefruit and other citrus fruits are possible triggers for IBS and migraine headaches avoid them if they are problematic for you. Note: Grapefruit and grapefruit juice can affect how some medications (most commonly cardiac meds) are

absorbed and metabolized, so always speak with your pharmacist about your medication/grapefruit interactions.

Grapes

There are many varieties of grapes. Red, purple, and black grapes contain quercetin and anthocyanins, antioxidants that have anti-inflammatory properties and may prevent and manage arthritis and slow memory decline. If you suffer from migraines, be aware that dark-skinned grapes contain tyramine, a possible migraine trigger.

Guava

Guava, a type of tropical fruit, is one of the absolute best sources of vitamin C, an antioxidant that helps prevent and manage arthritis, cataracts, and macular degeneration, as well as maintain healthy hair and skin. Like most fruit, guava provides high-quality carbohydrates and is made up of mostly water, making this fruit a good addition to a weight-loss plan.

Honeydew Melon

Honeydew melon is the sweetest and most delicious when it is in season in the summer. Honeydew, like other melons, has a high water content, making it a great choice for people who are trying to lose weight. It is also a very good source of potassium, which helps lower blood pressure and reduces the risk of osteoporosis.

Kiwi

Kiwi is a tropical fruit that is a good source of vitamins C and E, antioxidants that help prevent and manage arthritis, cataracts, and macular degeneration, as well as maintain healthy hair and skin. Like most fruit, kiwi is a high-quality carbohydrate made up of mostly water, making it a good addition to a weight-loss plan.

Lemons

Lemons are a common citrus fruit that are very high in vitamin C, an antioxidant found in many fruits that helps prevent and manage arthritis, cataracts, macular degeneration, and maintain healthy hair and skin. Lemons are a flavorful, low-calorie way to dress salads and jazz up chicken and fish — even a glass of plain or sparkling water. Because lemons and other citrus fruits are possible triggers for IBS and migraine headaches, avoid them if they are problematic for you.

Limes

Limes contain vitamin C (although not nearly as much as lemons). Vitamin C is an antioxidant found in many fruits that helps prevent and manage arthritis, cataracts, macular degeneration, and maintain healthy hair and skin. Limes are a flavorful, low-calorie way to dress salads and jazz up chicken and fish — even a glass of plain or sparkling water. Because limes and other citrus fruits are possible triggers for IBS and migraine headaches, avoid them if they are problematic for you.

Lychees

Lychees are a small tropical fruit with an inedible shell and small, sweet, translucent white flesh. They are an excellent source of vitamin C, an antioxidant found in many fruits that helps prevent and manage arthritis, cataracts, and macular degeneration, and maintain healthy skin.

Mandarin Oranges

Mandarin oranges are smaller than navel oranges and often hard to find fresh. They are commonly found canned in syrup and used in salads. Because the syrup adds calories and sugar, look for mandarin

oranges packed in juice and drain them well. If you have type 2 diabetes, you're better off choosing fresh, whole fruit with no added sugar or juice. Because mandarin oranges and other citrus fruits are possible triggers for IBS and migraine headaches, avoid them if they are problematic for you.

Mangoes

Mangoes, a type of tropical fruit, are a good source of vitamin C and beta-carotene, antioxidants that help prevent arthritis, cataracts, and macular degeneration, as well as maintain healthy hair and skin. IBS sufferers take note: You'll want to go easy on mangoes if you suffer from diarrhea-predominant IBS.

Nectarines

Nectarines are members of the stone-fruit family and are at their peak during the summer. They are a good source of beta-cryptoxanthin, an antioxidant that helps prevent and manage arthritis, and like most fruit, they provide high-quality carbohydrates and are made up of mostly water, making them a good addition to a weight-loss plan.

Oranges

Oranges are a popular citrus fruit with a high water content and a good amount of fiber, making them a great choice for people who are trying to lose weight or prevent or manage heart disease or type 2 diabetes. They are also a good source of vitamin C, an antioxidant found in many fruits that helps prevent arthritis, cataracts, and macular degeneration, and maintain healthy hair and skin. Folate in oranges may also help slow memory decline. Because oranges and other citrus fruits are possible triggers for IBS and migraine headaches avoid them if they are problematic for you.

Papaya

Papaya is a tropical fruit that is a good source of vitamins C and E and beta-cryptoxanthin, antioxidants that help prevent arthritis, cataracts, and macular degeneration, as well as maintain healthy hair and skin. It also provides potassium, which helps lower blood pressure and the risk of osteoporosis, and foliate, a B vitamin that may help slow memory decline. If you suffer from migraines be aware that papaya is a possible trigger.

Peaches

Peaches are members of the stone-fruit family and are at their peak during the late summer. They have a high water content and a good amount of fiber, making them a great choice for people who are trying to lose weight or prevent or manage heart disease. They are also a good source of beta-cryptoxanthin and anthocyanins, antioxidants that help prevent and manage arthritis, cataracts, and macular degeneration, and may help slow memory decline.

Pears

Like many other fresh fruits, pears provide high-quality carbohydrates, a healthy amount of soluble fiber, and a lot of water, making them a good choice if you're trying to lose weight or have high cholesterol. If you get migraine headaches be aware that red-skinned pears contain tannins, a possible trigger, but brown- and green-skinned varieties are a safe bet.

Persimmons

Persimmons, a type of tropical fruit, are a good source of vitamin C, beta-cryptoxanthin, lutein, and zeaxanthin, antioxidants that help prevent and manage arthritis, cataracts, and macular degeneration, and maintain healthy hair and skin.



Pineapple

Pineapple is a type of tropical fruit that is a good source of vitamin C, an antioxidant that helps prevent and manage arthritis, cataracts, and macular degeneration, as well as maintain healthy hair and skin. It also contains manganese, which may reduce PMS symptoms. Like most fruit, pineapple provides high-quality carbohydrates and is made up of mostly water, making it a good addition to a weight-loss plan. Because pineapple is a possible trigger for IBS and migraine headaches avoid this fruit if it is problematic for you.

Plums

Plums are members of the stone-fruit family and are at their peak during the summer. They are good sources of anthocyanins, antioxidants that help prevent arthritis, memory loss, cataracts, and macular degeneration. Potassium in plums also helps lower blood pressure and the risk of osteoporosis. Like most fruit, plums provide high-quality carbohydrates and are made up of mostly water, making them a good addition to a weight-loss plan. If you get migraine headaches be aware that red- and purple-skinned plums contain tannins, a possible trigger.

Prunes

Prunes, aka dried plums, aren't just for your grandparents anymore — they're good for people of all ages! They are a terrific source of soluble fiber, which helps to lower cholesterol and promote regularity. If you have type 2 diabetes or are trying to lose weight, it is best to limit your intake of prunes and other dried fruit because of the higher sugar and calorie concentration compared with fresh fruit. Potassium in prunes helps lower blood pressure and the risk of osteoporosis, and prunes rank high on the antioxidant scale, making them protective against cataracts and macular degeneration. If you suffer from migraines be aware that prunes may contain added sulfites, a possible migraine trigger.

Raisins

Raisins (dried grapes) are a good source of potassium, a mineral involved in lowering blood pressure and risk of osteoporosis. If you have type 2 diabetes or are trying to lose weight, it is best to limit your intake of raisins and other dried fruit because of the higher sugar and calorie concentration compared with that of fresh fruit. If you suffer from migraines be aware that raisins may contain added sulfites, a possible migraine trigger.

Tangerines

Tangerines are a variety of mandarin oranges, smaller than navel oranges and easier to peel and eat. Like oranges, tangerines are a good source of vitamin C, an antioxidant found in many fruits that helps prevent and manage arthritis, cataracts, and macular degeneration, and maintain healthy hair and skin. Like most fruit, they provide high-quality carbohydrates and are made up of mostly water, making them a good addition to a weight-loss plan. Because tangerines and other citrus fruits are possible triggers for IBS and migraine headaches avoid them if they are problematic for you.

Watermelon

Watermelon, like other melons, has a high water content and is low in calories, making it a great choice for people who are trying to lose weight. Watermelon is a good source of vitamin C and beta-carotene, antioxidants found in many fruits that help prevent arthritis, cataracts, and macular degeneration, and maintain healthy hair and skin.

