



Taken from: www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/280244.php

Originally cultivated in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, chickpeas, also known as garbanzo beans, have spread their culinary influence to areas all over the world. They are featured prominently in Italian, Greek, Indian, Middle Eastern, Spanish and Portuguese cuisine. Though the most common type of chickpea appears round and beige, other varieties include colors such as black, green, and red. Like other legumes such as beans, peas and lentils, chickpeas are prized for their high protein and fiber content, and also contain several key vitamins and minerals known to benefit human health.

Health Benefits

Diabetes:

Studies have shown that type 1 diabetics who consume high-fiber diets have lower blood glucose levels and type 2 diabetics may have improved blood sugar, lipids and insulin levels. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends 21-25 grams of fiber per day for women and 30-38 grams per day for men.

Bone health:

The iron, phosphate, calcium, magnesium, manganese, zinc and vitamin K content present in chickpeas all contribute to building and maintaining bone structure and strength. Though phosphate and calcium are both important in bone structure, the careful balance of the two minerals is necessary for proper bone mineralization - consumption of too much phosphorus with too little calcium intake can result in bone loss. Bone matrix formation requires the mineral manganese, and iron and zinc play crucial roles in the production and maturation of collagen. Low intakes of vitamin K have been associated with a higher risk for bone fracture. Adequate vitamin K



Healthy Foods

Health Benefits: Chickpeas

consumption is important for good health, as it acts as a modifier of bone matrix proteins, improves calcium absorption and may reduce urinary excretion of calcium.

Blood pressure:

Maintaining a low-sodium intake is essential to lowering blood pressure, however increasing potassium intake may be just as important because of its vasodilation effects. According to the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, fewer than 2% of US adults meet the daily 4700 mg recommendation.

Heart health:

The high fiber, potassium, vitamin C and vitamin B-6 content, coupled with the lack of cholesterol found in chickpeas, all support heart health. Chickpeas contain significant amounts of fiber, which helps lower the total amount of cholesterol in the blood, thereby decreasing the risk of heart disease. In one study, those who consumed 4069 mg of potassium per day had a 49% lower risk of death from ischemic heart disease compared to those who consumed less potassium (about 1000 mg per day).

Cancer:

Selenium is a mineral that is not present in most fruits and vegetables, but can be found in chickpeas. It plays a role in liver enzyme function, and helps detoxify some cancer-causing compounds in the body. Additionally, selenium prevents inflammation and also decreases tumor growth rates. Chickpeas also contain folate, which plays a role in DNA synthesis and repair, thus preventing the formation of cancer cells from mutations in the DNA. Saponins, which are phytochemicals present in chickpeas, prevent cancer cells from multiplying and spreading throughout the body. High-fiber intakes from fruits and vegetables like chickpeas are associated with a lowered risk of colorectal cancer. Vitamin C functions as a powerful antioxidant and helps protect cells against free radical damage.

Cholesterol:

Research shows that including chickpeas in the diet lowers the amount of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol in the blood.

Inflammation:

Choline is a very important and versatile nutrient in chickpeas that help with sleep, muscle movement, learning and memory. Choline also helps to maintain the structure of cellular membranes, aids in the transmission of nerve impulses, assists in the absorption of fat and reduces chronic inflammation.

Digestion and regularity:

Because of their high-fiber content, chickpeas help to prevent constipation and promote regularity for a healthy digestive tract. Lindsey Lee, RD, clinical dietitian with "Eat-Right" by UAB Weight Management Services, states: "Most of the fiber in chickpeas is insoluble fiber, which is great for digestive health. Individuals who eat them typically have better blood sugar regulation since chickpeas are so high in fiber and protein."

Weight management and satiety:

Dietary fibers are commonly recognized as important factors in weight management and loss by functioning as "bulking agents" in the digestive system. These compounds increase satiety and reduce appetite, making you feel



Healthy Foods

Health Benefits: Chickpeas

fuller for longer and thereby lowering your overall calorie intake. Consuming fruits and vegetables of all kinds has long been associated with a reduced risk of many lifestyle-related health conditions. Many studies have suggested that increasing consumption of plant foods like chickpeas decreases the risk of obesity and overall mortality, diabetes, heart disease and promotes a healthy complexion and hair, increased energy, overall lower weight.