



Taken from: [www.home.howstuffworks.com/peppers3.htm](http://www.home.howstuffworks.com/peppers3.htm)

Peppers don't have that spicy image for nothing. This vegetable is an excellent way to spice up otherwise bland dishes. Peppers come in a beautiful array of colors and shapes. They add flavor, color, and crunch to many low-calorie dishes.

### **Health Benefits**

#### **Loaded with Vitamins:**

All peppers are rich in vitamins A, C, and K, but red peppers are simply bursting with them. Antioxidant vitamins A and C help to prevent cell damage, cancer, and diseases related to aging, and they support immune function. They also reduce inflammation like that found in arthritis and asthma. Vitamin K promotes proper blood clotting, strengthens bones, and helps protect cells from oxidative damage.

#### **Cancer preventative:**

Red peppers are a good source of the carotenoid called lycopene, which is earning a reputation for helping to prevent prostate cancer as well as cancer of the bladder, cervix, and pancreas. Beta-cryptoxanthin, another carotenoid in red peppers, is holding promise for helping to prevent lung cancer related to smoking and secondhand smoke.

#### **Fiber:**

Besides being rich in phytochemicals, peppers provide a decent amount of fiber.



### **Hot is good:**

Hot peppers' fire comes from capsaicin, which acts on pain receptors, not taste buds, in our mouths. Capsaicin predominates in the white membranes of peppers, imparting its "heat" to seeds as well. The capsaicin in hot peppers has been shown to decrease blood cholesterol and triglycerides, boost immunity, and reduce the risk of stomach ulcers. It used to be thought that hot peppers aggravated ulcers. Instead, they may help kill bacteria in the stomach that can lead to ulcers.

### **Helps with weight loss:**

Both hot and sweet peppers contain substances that have been shown to increase the body's heat production and oxygen consumption for about 20 minutes after eating. This is great news; it means your body is burning extra calories, which helps weight loss.