

Health Benefits of Strawberry

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INTRODUCTION

The strawberry (*Fragaria ananassa* Duch.) is one of the most important fruit crops in the world. It is a small fruit belonging to the family Rosaceae and having chromosome number $2n=56$ (allo-octaploid). It is native to France. It is being cultivated in temperate regions, but due to its wide range of environmental adaptations, it is also being cultivated in sub-tropical and tropical climate. Strawberry is an herbaceous crop with a prostrate growth habit that acts as an annual in subtropical regions and a perennial in temperate regions. Strawberries, with their vibrant red hue and sweet, juicy flavour, are not only a delightful addition to our culinary experiences but also a treasure trove of health benefits.



These delectable berries, scientifically known as *Fragaria x ananassa*, are celebrated not only for their exquisite taste but also for their remarkable nutritional content and medicinal properties. Whether enjoyed fresh in a fruit salad, blended into a smoothie, or incorporated into various dishes, strawberries are a versatile and wholesome fruit that can enhance both your palate and your well-being.

In this exploration of the health benefits of strawberries, we delve into the myriad ways in which these small, succulent fruits can positively impact your health. From their impressive vitamin and antioxidant profile to their potential in preventing chronic diseases, strawberries have much to offer in the realm of nutrition and well-being.

Rich in Vitamins and Antioxidants: Strawberries are packed with essential vitamins and antioxidants, such as vitamin C, which can boost the immune system and protect the body from free radical damage.

Heart Health: Strawberries have been linked to improved heart health. They can help reduce the risk of heart disease by promoting healthy blood pressure, reducing inflammation, and improving cholesterol levels.

Weight Management: Strawberries are low in calories and high in fiber, making them a great choice for those looking to manage their weight. The fiber content also promotes satiety and aids in digestion.

Skin Health: The antioxidants in strawberries can help maintain healthy and youthful skin by protecting it from the harmful effects of UV radiation and promoting collagen production.

Cancer Prevention: Some studies suggest that the antioxidants in strawberries may help reduce the risk of certain cancers by inhibiting the growth of cancer cells.

Blood Sugar Regulation: Strawberries have a low glycemic index and may help stabilize blood sugar levels, making them a good choice for individuals with diabetes.

Cognitive Function: The flavonoids in strawberries have been associated with improved cognitive function and may help protect against age-related cognitive decline.

Anti-Inflammatory Effects: Strawberries contain compounds that can reduce inflammation in the body, potentially benefiting individuals with chronic inflammatory conditions.

Digestive Health: Strawberries are a good source of dietary fiber, which can aid in digestion and help prevent constipation. Fiber also supports a healthy gut microbiome.

Eye Health: Strawberries contain antioxidants like lutein and zeaxanthin, which are beneficial for eye health. These compounds may help reduce the risk of age-related macular degeneration and cataracts.

Bone Health: Strawberries are a source of essential minerals like manganese and vitamin K, which play a role in maintaining healthy bones. Manganese helps in collagen production, important for bone and cartilage health, and vitamin K is crucial for bone mineralization.

Anti-Aging: The antioxidants in strawberries can help counteract the effects of aging, including wrinkles and skin damage, by protecting the skin from oxidative stress.

Folate Content: Strawberries contain folate, a B-vitamin that is important during pregnancy as it supports fetal development and helps prevent certain birth defects.

Asthma Prevention: Some studies suggest that a high intake of strawberries and other fruits rich in vitamin C may reduce the risk of developing asthma.

CONCLUSION

Strawberries offer a wide range of health benefits due to their rich nutritional profile and various bioactive compounds. Including strawberries in your diet can be a delicious way to support overall health and well-being. However, it's important to remember that a

balanced diet and a healthy lifestyle, in general, are key to reaping these benefits.

In future, we will develop a strawberry cultivation unit at School of Agriculture, Sage University, Bhopal. It will be considered as living resource for students, faculties, and communities connecting beyond the campus. Hence, the facility can serve various

educational, research, and community engagement purposes. Starting strawberry cultivation can be an excellent way to teach students about agriculture, sustainability, and the joy of growing their own food. It also promotes a sense of responsibility and teamwork.