



Apples really could keep doctor away

Are apples as good for you as other fruits are?

Apples may seem like the plain-Jane of produce, but they offer plenty of nutritional punch.

First, the basics. A medium-sized 3-inch diameter apple (about 182 grams, or 6.5 ounces) has just 95 calories and gives you 4 grams of fiber — about 10 to 15 percent of what you need each day, including both soluble and insoluble fiber — as well as good helpings of vitamin C and potassium. Apples are an easy, inexpensive way to meet the Dietary Guidelines recommendation to eat 1.5 to 2 cups of fruit per day.

But a couple of recent studies indicate that, like other fruits and vegetables, apples' benefits go far beyond the basics.

In an analysis of studies done primarily since 2004 in *Advances in Nutrition*, the author suggests that apples' rich concentration of antioxidants and phytochemicals could help ward off cancer, cardiovascular disease, asthma and Alzheimer's disease. They could even have positive effects related to cognitive decline seen in normal aging, diabetes, weight management, bone health, pulmonary function and gastrointestinal protection.

In addition, findings from a Dutch study of more than 20,000 people in the September issue of *Stroke: Journal of the American Heart Association*, brought more good news. The study found that a high intake of apples, pears and other white-fleshed fruits and vegetables reduced the risk of

stroke by 52 percent. The researchers said that each 25-gram increase (just shy of an ounce) in white fruit and vegetable intake per day was linked with a 9 percent lower risk of stroke. Other white-fleshed produce, including cauliflower, bananas, chicory and cucumber, had the same effect, but apples and pears were more commonly eaten.

Nutrition experts recommend eating apples with their skin: Nearly half of an apple's vitamin C is just below the skin's surface, and the skin also has most of an apple's insoluble fiber content.

Apples come in hundreds of varieties; some are better for baking or sauces; others are better for eating fresh. An Ohio State University Extension fact sheet, "Selecting, Storing, and Serving Ohio Apples," available to download free online at <http://ohioline.osu.edu>, offers your best bets for uses of more than a dozen Ohio apple varieties. It also suggests storing apples in the refrigerator (32 to 35 degrees F is ideal) in a perforated plastic bag. It's best to wash apples immediately before eating or adding to a recipe by rinsing in cool water.

The U.S. Apple Association offers even more information to chew on at its website, <http://www.usapple.org/consumers/>.

Chow Line is a service of Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to *Chow Line*, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH, 43210-1044, or filipic.3@cfaes.osu.edu.



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October is National Apple Month.

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