

## 5 Amazing Health Benefits of Avocado

*Avocado is one of the most delicious and satisfying foods on the planet—and it's also a powerhouse superfood.*

Avocados are one of the most rich, delicious, and satisfying foods on the planet, but it is also a powerhouse superfood. Technically fruits, they are packed with anti-aging, disease fighting antioxidants, and nearly 20 different vitamins and minerals. One recent study found that regular avocado eaters have higher intakes of fiber, vitamins E and K, magnesium and potassium—pretty darn impressive!

Check out these five amazing avocado benefits.

### **They boost satiety**

Eating good fats helps to slow stomach emptying, which keeps you fuller longer and delays the return of hunger. Avocados, which provide about 22 grams of fat each (mostly as heart healthy monounsaturated fatty acids, or MUFAs), certainly fit the bill. In one recent study, volunteers rated feelings of satisfaction and appetite after dining on meals with or without avocado. The addition of half of an avocado to meals resulted in a significant boost in self-reported satiety and a reduced desire to eat for up to five hours. This is one of the reasons to reach for guacamole as a salad dressing.

### **They're waist whittlers**

According to a recent survey, Americans are still fat-phobic, probably due to the notion that eating fat makes you fat. But the truth is eating the right types of fat is actually a savvy weight-loss strategy. In addition to upping satiety, plant-based fats like avocado provide antioxidants and fight inflammation, which have both been linked to weight management. That may be why recent research revealed that regular avocado eaters weigh less and have smaller waists, even without eating fewer calories.

### **They protect your ticker**

The MUFAs in avocados have been shown to slash "bad" LDL cholesterol, and up "good" HDL levels—a double whammy effect that helps to lower the risk of heart disease, the #1 killer of both men and women. A recent UCLA study also uncovered some remarkable heart protective effects of avocado consumption: Compared to eating a burger without avocado, the addition of half of a Hass curbed the production of compounds that contribute to inflammation, improved blood flow, and didn't increase triglycerides (blood fats) beyond the amounts raised by the burger alone. Avocados are also a source of potassium, a nutrient that helps reduce blood pressure by acting as a natural diuretic to sweep excess sodium and fluid out of the body, which relieves pressure on the heart and arteries (bonus: that also means avocado is a natural de-bloater!).

### **They're nutrient boosters**

Enjoying avocado at mealtime can help your body absorb more antioxidants from other healthy foods. In one Ohio State study, when men and women ate salads and salsa topped with 2.5 tablespoons of avocado, they absorbed over 8 times more alpha-carotene and 13 times more beta-carotene—phytonutrients known to fight cancer and heart disease. Another recent study found that pairing avocado with tomato sauce and carrots boosts absorption of the veggies' vitamin A, a key nutrient needed for healthy skin, vision, and immunity.

### **They're not just for savory dishes**

Guacamole is wonderful, but what is great about avocado is that there are so many other ways to enjoy it, including in sweet dishes. You can whip avocado into fruit smoothies, add it to fruit tacos (yes, fruit!), whip it into chocolaty pudding, and substitute it for butter when baking. Just trade each tablespoon of butter in recipes like brownies and cupcakes for half a tablespoon of avocado. This swap slashes calories, upgrades the nutritional quality of your goodies, and still provides the creamy texture that will leave you feeling satisfied. Try it out!

~ By Cynthia Sass, MPH, RD via Health.com