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8 Scientific Health Benefits of Pineapple

Pineapple is more than just a delicious tropical fruit — it offers significant health benefits as well. In fact, it's been used in folk medicine since ancient times, according to a study published in September 2016 in *Biomedical Reports*. It's native to the Americas and is also grown in tropical climates around the world, according to the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH).

"Pineapple is a great source of vitamin C, B vitamins, fiber, and minerals like manganese," says Julie Andrews, RDN, a chef based in Appleton, Wisconsin.

You'll find pineapple offered fresh, frozen, and canned, making it a year-round option for those living in the United States. Canned pineapple is convenient, but be sure to look for an option that's packed in its own juices, not syrup, says Allison Knott, RDN, a dietitian in New York City. "Fruit naturally contains sugar in the form of fructose, so even the canned fruit in its own juice will have grams of sugar listed on the label," she says. "However, the syrup is considered added sugar and will increase the total grams of sugar while contributing to added sugar intake for the day."



There are also plenty of ways to enjoy this juicy yellow fruit. You can grill slices and serve them with meat or as a tasty side, or you can toss frozen chunks into a smoothie. You can also, of course, snack on bite-sized pieces. No matter how you prefer to eat it, you'll want to begin incorporating pineapple into your diet if you haven't already. Here are eight reasons why.

1. Pineapple Is a Fruit That's Rich in Vitamin C

"The standout nutrient in pineapple is vitamin C, which supports the immune system and provides antioxidant benefits," says Jackie Newgent, RDN, a New York City-based culinary nutritionist and the author of *The All-Natural Diabetes Cookbook*. One cup of pineapple contains 78.9 milligrams (mg) of vitamin C, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). That's more than the recommended dietary allowance for adult women (which is 75 mg per day) and close to the recommendation for men (90 mg per day), according to MedlinePlus. Vitamin C is important because it encourages growth and healing around the body and plays a role in everything from wound repair to iron absorption.

2. Eating Pineapple May Enhance Your Weight Loss

You may have heard that pineapple can lead to weight loss. There isn't a whole lot of evidence to back up that claim, though an animal study published in April 2018 in *Food Science and Biotechnology* did find that pineapple juice may help decrease fat formation and increase fat breakdown. More studies in humans are needed to confirm that result, though.

Even if it doesn't have a significant effect on your metabolism, it's a good snack choice because it (and other fruits) is low in calories, high in important vitamins and minerals, and does not include saturated fats or trans fats, Andrews says. "There is no specific fruit or vegetable that directly causes weight loss, but they'll help fill you up without packing in calories," Andrews says. "So people tend to eat fewer calories overall if they consume several cups of fruits and vegetables each day as part of a well-balanced diet."

You may also find that the fruit satisfies your sweet tooth. "Pineapple is lower in calories than other sweet treats, so if you enjoy a serving of pineapple versus an ice cream cone for your nightly dessert, you may consume fewer calories and, in turn, lose weight," says Colleen Christensen, RD, a dietitian based in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Pineapple also delivers some fiber (2.3 grams in 1 cup, per the USDA), which can help control your blood sugar level and help you eat less because it keeps you feeling full, according to the Mayo Clinic.

3. Eating Pineapple May Aid Your Digestion

Pineapple contains bromelain, which is a mix of enzymes that studies show can reduce inflammation and nasal swelling, and also aid in the healing of wounds and burns, according to the NCCIH. It's also been linked to helping improve digestion and has historically been used in Central and South American countries to treat digestive disorders. A study published in *Biotechnology Research International* found that the bromelain in pineapple may help reduce the effects of diarrhea.

4. The Manganese in Pineapple Promotes Healthy Bones

Along with calcium, the trace mineral manganese is essential for maintaining strong bones, according to the University of Rochester Medical Center. Pineapple is one of the top food sources of the mineral, according to Oregon State University — a single cup of pineapple contains about 76 percent of the recommended daily value of manganese. Manganese may help stave off osteoporosis and helps improve overall bone and mineral density, according to Oregon State University. Be careful not to overdo it, though — manganese intake can be dangerous and may increase the risk of cognitive disorders if you consume more than 11 mg per day, according to a study published in *The Open Orthopaedics Journal*. But don't fret: It'd be difficult to reach those levels because ½ cup pineapple has less than 1 mg manganese, Andrews says.

5. Pineapple Is Packed with Disease-Fighting Antioxidants

According to a study published in June 2014 in *Molecules*, pineapple is a great source of antioxidants, specifically phenolics, flavonoids, and vitamin C. "Antioxidants are compounds in food that may help fight inflammation and free radicals in the body," Knott says. According to the NCCIH, free radicals are molecules that can cause cellular damage and lead to health issues, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, and eye problems. Filling up on antioxidant-rich foods like pineapple can play a role in countering those risks.

6. Thanks to Its Antioxidants, Pineapple Has Cancer-Fighting Properties

Cancer occurs when abnormal cells in the body multiply and take over the healthy tissue, according to the Mayo Clinic. While there's no guaranteed way to prevent cancer, experts suggest eating a healthy diet — ideally one that's high in antioxidants, which you can source through pineapple, to help fight off free radicals — to reduce your risk, according to Stanford Health Care. A study published in November 2018 in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that diets and blood concentrations high in antioxidants were associated with a lower risk of cancer.

7. Pineapple Fits in an Anti-Inflammatory Diet

Too much inflammation can lead to many diseases, including coronary artery disease, diabetes, cancer, and Alzheimer's, according to Harvard Health Publishing. Thankfully, a diet rich in anti-inflammatory foods, such as pineapple, can help reduce the amount of inflammation in the body. According to a study published in September 2016 in *Biomedical Reports*, pineapple's bromelain content is the reason for its anti-inflammatory properties.

8. Pineapple's Nutrient Profile Means the Fruit Can Help Boost Immunity

You may want to reach for pineapple the next time you're battling a cold. A study published in 2014 in the *Journal of Nutrition and Metabolism* found that children who consumed canned pineapple had fewer viral and bacterial infections compared to children who did not consume it over the nine-week study period. The researchers concluded that eating one to two cans (140 to 280 grams) of pineapple daily may reduce the likelihood of an infection or at least shorten its duration.

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