

Know your fruit, The Strawberry

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Strawberry is a very useful & nourishing fruit. It contains numerous micro-nutrients & vitamins. The fragrantly sweet juiciness and deep red color of strawberries can brighten up both the taste and aesthetics of any meal. Not only do they taste great they are among the fruits and vegetables **ranked highest** in health-promoting antioxidants.

Health Benefits:

- Strawberry is found to have health benefits in following area: -
 1. Cardiovascular support and prevention of cardiovascular diseases.
 2. Improved regulation of blood sugar, with decreased risk of type 2 diabetes.
 3. Prevention of certain cancers including breast, cervical, colon, and esophageal cancer.
 4. Delayed aging and aging-related events.
 5. Improvement of inflammatory bowel problems including Ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease
 6. Arthritis (including rheumatoid arthritis), and inflammation-related diseases of the eye (including macular degeneration)

Practical Tips:

Storage:

- Recent research has shown strawberries to be a surprisingly fragile, perishable, and delicate fruit. On average, studies show **2 days** as the maximal time for strawberry storage without major loss of vitamin C and antioxidants. It's not that strawberries become dangerous to eat or invaluable after 2 days.

Ripeness:

- In terms of ripeness, recent studies have found that both under-ripeness and over-ripeness can have an unexpectedly large impact on their antioxidant contents. Fortunately, optimal strawberry ripeness can be judged by color. You'll want to consume strawberries when their amazing pinkish-red color is most vibrant and rich in luster.

How to clean & prepare:

Strawberries are very perishable & hence, should not be washed until right before eating or using in a recipe. Do not remove their caps and stems until after you have gently washed the berries under cold running water and patted them dry. This will prevent them from absorbing excess water, which can degrade strawberries' texture and flavor.

How much & how often:

The CDC recommends between 1.5-2.5 cups of fruit and 2.5-4.0 cups of vegetables per day. Consumption of 12-20 strawberries will meet the daily fruit requirement for 1.5-2.5 cups. It is good to include berries at least 3-4 times per week. Like the other fruits, enjoy strawberries raw because they provide you with the best flavor and the greatest benefits from their vast array of nutrients and digestion aiding enzymes. Nutrients including vitamins, antioxidants, and enzymes are unable to withstand the temperature (350°F/175°C) used in baking & therefore, it is best to consume fresh & raw Strawberries. Peoples around the world have long been eating fruit for dessert, not only as a delicious ending to a meal but as a great digestive aid as well. Hence, even post-meal Strawberry consumption is beneficial.

Conclusion:

Therefore, let us engulf now & regularly strawberries for their health benefits, at a stage when they are enticingly Pink.