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# Fight Inflammation With Antioxidants

How an apple a day can keep the doctor away

By M. Carol Burns

An apple a day is a good recipe for health: Research shows the tart-tasting fruit provides a bounty of nutritional benefits. But it turns out some apples may be better than others. When it comes to disease-fighting antioxidants, Red Delicious stands head and shoulders above the rest – especially with its skin on.

Tests by researchers at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada found Red Delicious beat eight other varieties in the level of polyphenols, a source of antioxidants that help rid the body of cell-damaging free radicals and may help suppress inflammation. And polyphenols were five times more prevalent in the apples' skin than the flesh.

"Everyone should increase the portion of fruits and vegetables in their diet, and apples are among the best in terms of health benefits," says lead researcher Rong Tsao, PhD. "Choosing apples with a high proportion of disease-fighting polyphenols can potentially produce more health benefits."

Although the Red Delicious variety ranked tops in antioxidants, adding apples of any kind – along with their peels – to your diet is a good move, says registered dietitian Christen S. Wooten of Lake Norman Nutri Associates in Davidson, N.C. "Eating apples with dark red skin has the added benefit of more antioxidants, but including a variety of apples in your diet is beneficial," she says.

With a mere 80 calories, apples are packed with nutrition, containing vitamins A and C, which contribute to healthy skin and repair of body tissues. A medium apple (about the size of a tennis ball) counts as one serving and contains about five grams of dietary fiber, which aids digestion and promotes weight loss. And recent studies have suggested the phytonutrients in apples and apple juice may help protect arteries from plaque build-up and guard against cell damage that contributes to age-related memory loss.

Just remember to wash apples well, says Wooten – especially if you're leaving the skin on.

**[Easy Tips for Adding Apples to Your Diet](#)**

- Grate apples and add to pancake, waffle or muffin batter.
- Dice apples, heat in the microwave with a sprinkle of sugar and cinnamon, and place on top of frozen yogurt.
- Toss a few slices on your oatmeal or cereal.
- Include apples in your smoothies.
- Carry slices in a sandwich bag to nibble on throughout the day.
- Have a few slices of apple with peanut butter for a mid-afternoon snack.
- Many fast-food restaurants now offer apple slices with kids meals instead of fries, or apples with yogurt as a healthy dessert. Make the switch.