



Watermelons Are Not Just For Kids

Despite the popular belief that watermelon is just water and sugar, watermelon is actually a nutrient dense food. It provides high levels of vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants and just a small number of calories.

Watermelons have become synonymous with summer and picnics, and for good reason. Their refreshing quality and sweet taste help to combat the heat and provide a guilt-free, low maintenance dessert. Consuming fruits and vegetables of all kinds has long been associated with a reduced risk of many lifestyle-related health conditions. Many studies have suggested that increasing consumption of plant foods like watermelon decreases the risk of obesity and overall mortality, diabetes, and heart disease. Other benefits of the watermelon include promoting a healthy complexion and hair, increased energy, and overall lower weight.

A study published by the *American Journal of Hypertension* found that watermelon extract supplementation improved the health of the circulatory system in obese middle-aged adults with prehypertension or stage 1 hypertension.

Diets rich in lycopene—found in watermelon—may help protect against heart disease.

Made up of 92 percent water and full of important electrolytes, watermelon is a great snack to have on hand to prevent dehydration. It can also be frozen in slices for a tasty cold Popsicle-style snack.

Choline—found in watermelon—is a very important and versatile nutrient; it aids our bodies in sleep, muscle movement, learning, and memory. Choline also helps to maintain the structure of cellular membranes, aids in the transmis-

sion of nerve impulses, assists in the absorption of fat, and reduces chronic inflammation.

As an excellent source of antioxidants, including vitamin C, watermelon can help combat the formation of free radicals known to cause cancer. Lycopene intake has been linked with a decreased risk of prostate cancer in several studies.

Watermelon, because of its water and fiber content, helps to prevent constipation and promote regularity for a healthy digestive tract.

The risks for developing asthma are lower in people who consume a high amount of certain nutrients—one of which is vitamin C, found in watermelon.

Watermelon and watermelon juice have been shown to reduce muscle soreness and improve recovery time following exercise in athletes. Researchers believe this is likely due to the amino acid L-citrulline contained in watermelon.

Watermelon is great for the skin because it contains vitamin A, a nutrient required for sebum production, which keeps hair moisturized. Vitamin A is also necessary for the growth of all bodily tissues, including skin and hair. Adequate intake of vitamin C is also needed for the building and maintenance of collagen, which provides structure to skin and hair. Additionally, watermelon contributes to overall hydration, which is vital for healthy looking skin and hair.