

## Citrus Fruit can be a Boost of Health for the New Year

Why not buy some oranges, tangerines, grapefruit, lemons, and/or limes the next you visit the grocery store. You will give yourself a health boost for the New Year.

This is the prime season for buying citrus fruit. It is in abundant and the prices are lower. Citrus fruits have been eaten for thousands of years and the health benefits of these foods are continually showing that eating a piece of fruit is a wise lifestyle choice.

Citrus fruits are full of vitamin C that is needed to maintain a strong immune and they help protect against scurvy. They promote heart health and reduce the risk of some chronic diseases. Citrus fruits can help in cancer prevention and are also useful in diabetes glucose level control. Citrus fruit skin is high in essential oils that are removed to be used in flavorings or as fragrant essences in aroma therapy oil, cosmetics and soap. Even the acidity of lemons is a good remedy for the alkaline bee sting and a few drops of a lime are squeezed by martial artist into the corner of their eyes to help with their vision. Other important nutrients found in citrus fruits include fiber, folate, lycopene, potassium, Vitamin B6, polynutrients and more.

The color of the fruit is very important. Each color provides different nutrients that our bodies need. It is important to include a variety of colors every day for these important nutrients.

- Red contains antioxidants that help fight heart disease, cholesterol and some cancers.
- Green provides phytochemicals to help protect eyes and prevent cancerous tumors. Greens have essential vitamins including folate, minerals and fiber.
- Orange and yellow contain beta-carotene that is essential for a good immune system. It is rich in Vitamin C, folate and Vitamin A.
- Blue and purple provide phytochemicals which are antioxidants for the body that protect against cancer and disease. The blue and purple also provide Vitamin C, folic acid and fiber.
- White provides allicin, sulfaforaphanes, polyphenols and phytochemicals that help in fighting cancers, lowering blood pressure and cholesterol.

Citrus fruits are also great for decorating. A bowl of fresh fruits as a centerpiece can brighten your day and remind you that selecting a piece of fruit instead of candy or a cookie is a wise choice.

You can increase your fruit intake many ways. Add oranges and lemons to water and allow infusing overnight. Add fresh lemons and limes to drinks. Eat half a grapefruit every morning for breakfast. Have a citrus snack every day. Prepare salads using citrus fruit with lettuce and spinach. Top meal entries with a fruit sauce.

You can also preserve citrus fruits by canning your own grapefruits and oranges. They can make a great mix for breakfast or salads. Begin by selecting firm, sweet fruit. Peel and remove the white tissue from the citrus fruit. Break the fruits into sections and fill jars with the fruit. Next fill the jars with water or hot syrup according to taste. A light syrup of 1 cup sugar to 4 cups of water give an enriched flavor. Pour liquid over the fruit in the jars leaving one-half inch head space. Apply the lids and rings and

process pints or quarts in a water bath for 10 minutes for under 1,000 feet altitude or 15 feet for 1,001 and above.