

## **Avocados are good for your Health**

Once a simple and not so popular fruit, the avocado has become a countrywide obsession from avocado based dishes. Consumption of the delicious fruit have grown from 436 million pounds in 1985 to over 2.4 billion pounds currently. Avocados are grown mainly in Mexico and Central America; this nutritious and delicious food has changed the eating patterns of people all over.

Avocados have been around for over 10,000 years, with consumption of wild avocados mainly in Central America. It wasn't until 1833 when avocados were brought to the United States and planted in Florida. They are grown mostly in California, Florida and Hawaii. There are about 146,310 tons grown annually.

Avocados are a nutritious food that can be included in a variety of dishes. They can be eaten at any meal. They are filled with a healthy fat that can help reduce the risk of heart disease. There are many other benefits for the body.

Avocados promote satiety. Avocados are loaded with fiber, making it a great fruit to increase fullness and therefore promote weight loss or maintenance. According to the American Heart Association, the average adult should consume about 25 to 30 grams of fiber per day. In just one medium sized avocado, there is 3 grams of dietary fiber, which is 11 percent of the daily value. The high amount of soluble fiber is linked to lowering risks of diseases because of its positive effect on healthy gut bacteria.

Avocados are good for your heart. They contain a high level of monounsaturated fat, which helps to increase HDL or the "healthy" fat levels in our bodies. Studies also show that eating avocados can decrease total cholesterol by about 22 percent and lower triglyceride levels by about 20 percent. Eating in moderation helps to keep your body full of the good fat and decreases the amount of bad fat.

Avocados are rich in potassium. For every 50 grams of avocado, there is about 250 milligrams of potassium. This is about equal to about 6 percent of the daily value and almost 60 percent more potassium than found in bananas. Potassium is important for the body because it helps the heart muscles work efficiently, lowers blood pressure, build muscle and protein and maintains proper body growth.

Avocados help improve eye health. They are filled with antioxidants that help protect your eyes and enhance vision. Studies show that the carotenoids in avocados, called lutein and zeaxanthin, greatly reduce the risk of macular degeneration and cataracts in older adults. Consumption of avocados most likely will benefit eye health over a longer period because of these nutrients.

Avocados can help decrease inflammation in the body. The Omega 3 oils in an avocado benefit the body with their anti-inflammatory effects. They help to prevent joint damage and to reduce inflammation in individuals with osteoarthritis, which is a chronic disease of the bones prevalent in the elderly population.

### **Zesty Guacamole**

4 avocados, ripe  
½ clove garlic, diced  
1 Roma tomato, diced

1 teaspoon pepper sauce  
1 tablespoon lime juice  
1 tablespoon onion, minced  
¼ teaspoon

1. In a small bowl, mash the avocado with a fork or a potato masher to make a slightly chunky mixture.
2. Stir in lime juice, garlic, tomato, onion, pepper sauce and salt.
3. Enjoy!