

THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF BRUSSELS SPROUTS

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Brussels sprouts – you either love them or you hate them! I am a fan and have found lots of interesting and tasty ways to add them into my diet over the years. However, if it were not for my nutrition training and knowing the high benefits of these little green balls, I might not have been so enthused to invite them onto my plate. Remember a Brussels sprout is not just for Christmas!

Brussels are part of a vegetable group known as the **Brassica family** and are closely related to kale, cauliflower, mustard greens and cabbage (not surprisingly, as you will agree they look like mini cabbages!).

Brussels are known for their highly nutritious and protective properties for human health.

Here are five benefits of Brussels sprouts:

High in Fibre

Just a half cup (78 grams) of cooked Brussels sprouts contains two grams of fibre, fulfilling up to 8% of your daily fibre needs. Fibre is an important part of health and including a good amount of it in your diet affords many health benefits. Studies show that dietary fibre can relieve constipation by increasing stool frequency and softening stool consistency to ease passage. Fibre also promotes

digestive health by helping feed the beneficial bacteria in your gut. (1)

Skin Health

They also contain vitamin A which helps to look after the health of our skin and eyes, and all of the B vitamins, especially folic acid which helps the body to form healthy red blood cells and is required in greater amounts during pregnancy. (2)

Cancer Prevention

Brussels sprouts have a lot of a natural, sulfur-based substance with a name that is a bit of a tongue twister: glucosinolate glucobrassicin. Research shows that this compound may help prevent damage to your DNA that raises your chances of getting cancer. It may also stop new blood vessels from growing inside tumours. (3)

Boost Immune System

One of the most impressive characteristics of Brussels sprouts is their high vitamin C content. A single cup of Brussels sprouts contains more than 120% of your daily recommended amount of vitamin C. This is critical for the health of your immune system, as vitamin C stimulates the production of white blood cells and acts as an antioxidant in the body, reducing oxidative stress and lowering your chances of chronic diseases. (4)

Fighting Fatty Liver Disease

Eating Brussels sprouts may be one way to combat non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD). A study led by Texas A&M University found that levels of a compound called indole are lower in the blood of people with fat around their liver than people without fat accumulation around the liver. Researchers also found that indole may reduce inflammation caused by fatty liver disease. Those experts suggest that Brussels sprouts and other cruciferous vegetables that produce indole could be used as a part of treatment therapy for NAFLD. (5)

So, if you have always been in the anti-Brussels party, why not give them another chance? You can always investigate different ways of serving them to make the taste more palatable.

Note: Remember to check with your doctor before you add them to your diet if you take blood thinners. Like some other cruciferous veggies, Brussels sprouts are high in vitamin K, which helps your blood clot. If you take medicine called blood thinners, too much vitamin K could prevent them from working as well as they should. Ask your doctor about how often it's safe for you to eat Brussels sprouts (6)

References:

- 1) www.healthline.com
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- 3) www.webmd.com
- 4) www.organicfacts.net
- 5) www.eatingwell.com
- 6) www.webmd.com