

## Benefits of Consuming Lentils in Our Daily Diet

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### SUMMARY

Lentils are a high-protein, high-fiber member of the legume family. Like a mini version of a bean, lentils grow in pods and come in red, brown, black, and green varieties. They are relatively quick and easy to prepare compared with dried beans, and their low cost makes them an accessible form of high-quality protein for many people around the world.

### INTRODUCTION

Lentils are an excellent natural source of folate and manganese. They are an economical source of protein. Evidence suggests they protect heart health. Lentils are an easy-to-prepare, versatile, and nutritious ingredient. Lentils are rich in minerals, protein, and fiber and are a highly nutritious food. Lentils are also a source of riboflavin, niacin, pantothenic acid, magnesium, zinc, copper, manganese, and selenium. Consuming plant-based foods of all kinds is associated with a reduced risk of many lifestyle-related health conditions. Many studies have suggested that increasing consumption of plant foods like lentils decreases the risk of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and overall mortality while promoting a healthy complexion and hair, increased energy, and overall lower weight.

### Types of Lentils

There are three main types of lentil includes:

**Brown lentils:** These have a mild, earthy flavor and will become mushy when overcooked. These are best used in soups.

**French green, or Puy, lentils:** These have a peppery taste and are better in salads, due to their crunchy texture.

**Red lentils:** These are common in Middle-Eastern or Indian cuisine and are actually brown Massor lentils that have had their hulls removed. They are most effective in purees and recipe thickeners.



### Health Benefits of Consuming Lentils

#### Heart Health

Lentils can be highly beneficial for heart health. The fiber, folic acid, and potassium in lentils all support heart health. According to the American Heart Association (AHA), increased fiber intake can reduce low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, or "bad" cholesterol levels, beyond what can be achieved by a diet low in saturated and trans fats alone. Not only is fiber associated with a lower incidence of cardiovascular disease, but also with a slower progression of the disease in high-risk individuals. Lentils add essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber to the diet, and they provide protein and sustenance that can replace meat in meals. When meat, a major source of

saturated and trans fats in the diet, is replaced with a high-fiber food like lentils, the risk for heart disease is further decreased. The potassium, calcium, and magnesium in lentils have been found to decrease pressure naturally.

### **Pregnancy**

Folate is critical for preventing congenital disabilities. It has been shown to cut the chances of early delivery by 50 percent or more if consumed for at least a year before pregnancy. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that women consume 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day during their childbearing years. One cup of lentils provides almost 90 percent of the required folate needs for a day.

### **Cancer**

Selenium is a mineral found in lentils. It is not present in most other foods. Selenium prevents inflammation, decreases tumor growth rates, and improves immune response to infection by stimulating the production of disease-killing T-cells. It also plays a role in liver enzyme function and helps detoxify some cancer-causing compounds in the body. The fiber in lentils is also associated with a lowered risk of colorectal cancer.

### **Fighting Fatigue**

Lentils are a great way to keep energy up and combat fatigue. Iron deficiency is a common cause of fatigue. Women aged 18 to 50 years are particularly susceptible to iron deficiency. Not getting enough iron in the diet can affect how efficiently the body uses energy. Lentils are a good non-heme source of iron. 100gm of cooked lentils contains over one-third of daily iron needs. Non-heme means that the source of iron is not the hemoglobin in the blood. Meat and fish contain heme iron, while plant sources are non-heme. Non-heme iron is less easy for the body to absorb, but it is valuable for people who do not consume meat for health or other reasons.

### **Digestion**

Adequate fiber intake is commonly recognized as an important factor in weight loss by functioning as a "bulking agent" in the digestive system. Fiber in the diet helps to increase satiety and reduce appetite, giving a "full" feeling for longer. This can lower the overall calorie intake. The high fiber in lentils also helps prevent constipation and promote regularity for a healthy digestive tract.

### **CONCLUSION**

From the above information it is concluded that consumption of lentils in our diet gives us many health benefits and essential nutrients for our body metabolism and provides good and healthy lifestyle.

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