

OPTIMAL HEALTH UNIVERSITY™

Presented by Katie Gravesen, DC

Snack on Seeds

Inside each tiny seed is the blueprint for a miracle: everything needed to ensure future generations of the plant. But that's not all. Many seed varieties also contain essential nutrients with proven health benefits for humans.

Dr. Gravesen has long advocated the inclusion of seeds in patients' diets. Seeds include vitamins, minerals, proteins and essential oils — all of which prevent illness and disease. And they do it naturally, without the negative side effects associated with drugs.

Due to the fragility of their nutrients, Dr. Gravesen suggests that patients eat only the freshest seeds. Heat, light and air can weaken a seed's nutritional integrity and zap its health-boosting benefits. Look for organically grown, unshelled seeds without preservatives, added salt or other flavorings.

To learn more about this "seedy" subject, read on!

Sunflower Seeds

Sunflowers are more than just another pretty face in the field. Their seeds are rich in B vitamins, potassium, phosphorous, selenium, copper and magnesium. They are also high in protein and naturally low in carbohydrates.

Sunflower seeds can be eaten raw or ground into flour. But, because of their high fat content, they tend to go



rancid faster than other seeds: even while still in the shells. So it's a good idea to give your sunflower seeds a sniff test before popping them in your mouth.

Mustard Seeds

When researchers in India added mustard seeds to the diet of mice, the results were astonishing: The mustard seeds significantly inhibited the growth of tumors in the stomach and uterine cervix.

"The results strongly suggest the cancer chemopreventive potentials of mustard seeds," said the researchers, who also noted that mustard seeds "enhance the antioxidant defense system and, in turn, provide protection against the toxic effects of carcinogens. It is likely that the use of mustard seeds in the diet may contribute to reducing the risk of cancer incidence and burden in the human population." (*Hum Exp Toxicol* 2005;24:303-12.)

Pumpkin Seeds

Need a little extra magnesium, zinc and copper in your diet? Then try munching on a handful or two of pumpkin seeds. Or, if you are really industrious, grind them into flour.

When researchers in Egypt compared the nutritional quality of pumpkin-seed flour to that of flour made from



paprika or watermelon seeds, flour made from the seed kernels of pumpkins had more essential amino acids and better protein digestibility (*J Agric Food Chem* 2001;49:1253-9).

Sesame Seeds

They may be tiny, but sesame seeds are big sources of calcium. And that's just for starters. They also contain copper, manganese, magnesium, iron, thiamin, zinc and vitamin B⁶.

Many people nibble on sesame seeds in their natural state, but sesame seeds are also ground into a nut butter known as "tahini" — a delicious alternative to peanut butter used in many Middle Eastern foods, such as humus.

As with all food products, check sesame seeds for mold or spoilage before eating.

Flaxseeds

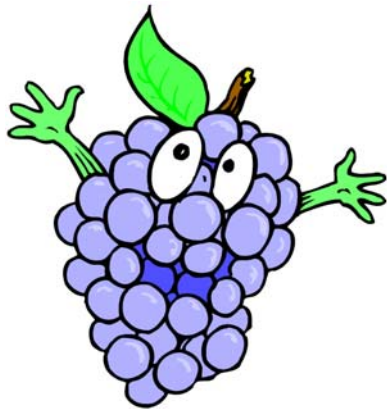
Flaxseeds contain magnesium, folate, copper and iron. And their oil contains high levels of omega-3 fatty acids that researchers say are effective in preventing colon tumors (*Nutr Cancer* 2005;51:52-8).

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Other studies show that flaxseeds can modestly reduce LDL (“bad”) cholesterol concentrations, help prevent diabetes by cutting post-meal glucose absorption and decrease some markers of inflammation (*Nutr Rev* 2004;62:18-27).

Grape Seeds

Free radicals — a byproduct of breathing oxygen — are continually bombarding our blood streams and vital organs, causing us to “rust” from the inside out. Grape seeds contain proanthocyanidins (GSP), potent free-radical scavengers: something that researchers in Saudi Arabia say is particularly good news for type 2 diabetics. This form of diabetes is known to increase production of free radicals that, in turn, deplete the body’s defense systems (*Pharmacol Res* 2005;52:264-70).



But the health benefits of grape seeds don’t stop there. According to researchers in Italy, adding grape-seed supplements to your diet may help you avoid overeating. This conclusion was based on studying the amount of food eaten by 51 volunteers in a controlled setting over a three-day period. Thirty to 60 minutes before eating, half of the volunteers received grape-seed supplements and half received placebo supplements. Researchers found that those who consumed the grape-seed supplements ate 4 percent less food than their placebo counterparts (*Eur J Clin Nutr* 2004;58:667-73).

Grapefruit Seeds

When it comes to infections of the urinary tract, cranberry juice has long been touted as an all-natural alternative to drugs. But researchers in Nigeria have discovered that grapefruit seeds also possess an all-natural antibiotic component. Just five to six grapefruit seeds (dried or fresh) every eight hours for two weeks proved curative for three of the four patients studied (*J Altern Complement Med* 2005;11:369-71). However, do not eat larger quantities, as they may become toxic.

Black Currant Seeds

The oil made from black currant seeds includes omega-3 fatty acids, which ward off a vast array of disorders.

Cottonseeds

Yes, it’s true: you can eat cottonseeds! In fact, they are great sources of omega-6 essential fatty acids.

“Cottonseed protein has the potential to increase the world’s food supply while decreasing the incidence of malnutrition among the world’s hungry,” according to researchers in Texas. “Nutritionally, cottonseed flour compares favorably to other animal and vegetable protein sources, as it is low in fat and contains a substantial amount of high biological value protein.” (*Plant Foods Hum Nutr* 1996;49:1-11.)

The researchers maintain that animal studies, as well as human research, show that cottonseed protein promotes growth, increases weight gain and establishes a positive nitrogen balance. Baked goods, snack foods and candy are just a few of the successful products developed using cottonseed protein.

Perilla Seeds

Extremely popular in Asia — their country of origin — perilla seeds are high in omega-3 essential fatty acids. But here’s a unique twist: They also have an antibacterial component. Ac-

ording to researchers in Japan, perilla seeds “may be the source of an antimicrobial agent that could prevent dental cavities and periodontal diseases.” (*Biosci Biotechnol Biochem* 2002;66:921-4.)

You can purchase these small, round, beige-colored seeds in Asian and health-food stores. Perilla seeds are a popular addition to meat marinades, and ground perilla seeds add a unique zest to soups.

Caution for Children

All seeds pose a choking hazard — so never allow your children to eat seeds unless you are present to monitor their intake. Seeds may also pose an allergy risk for some children, especially sesame seeds.

Caution for All Ages

Not all seeds are edible. Some are toxic, especially when eaten in large quantities. So stick with the seeds listed in this handout in serving sizes sold in natural food stores.

Poppy seeds contain various amounts of the drug morphine. Consequently, urine testing will reveal trace amounts of morphine (*Forensic Sci Int* 2004;143:183-6). Hemp seeds are packed with health benefits, but also contain small amounts of THC.

Not Just for the Birds!

Seeds, as we’ve illustrated in this *Optimal Health University*[®] handout, are definitely not just for the birds. They are also for humans who understand that preventative health care includes proper nutrition, exercise and regular chiropractic care.

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