



7 Ways Pulses Promote Heart Health

Do you love your heart? Eating more pulses is a great way to show the love because pulses (think beans, peas, chickpeas and lentils) are heart healthy foods. Pulse are packed with key nutrients plus filling fiber that can help keep your body—and heart—healthy and strong.

Research has shown that regularly eating pulses may reduce your risk of heart disease. Wonder why? Read on to discover seven ways pulses promote heart health.

1 Pulses Are Packed with Key Nutrients

Pulses may be small, but they are packed with important nutrients that promote heart health. Studies show that people who eat at least a half cup of pulses each day have higher intakes of fiber and potassium, as well as protein, calcium, zinc, iron and magnesium.

2 Pulses Are Low In Fat and Sodium

All pulses are low in fat, and in their dry form very low in sodium. Eating excess fat, specifically trans fat, and salt (i.e., sodium chloride) has been linked with an increased risk of high blood pressure, a risk factor for having a heart attack or stroke. You can buy pulses in their dry or canned form. Draining and rinsing canned pulses like beans and chickpeas can remove up to 40% of the added sodium.

3 Pulses Are Full of Folate

Folate is a B-vitamin that promotes heart health by helping keep our arteries soft and elastic, which helps maintain healthy blood pressure levels. Pulses are an excellent source of folate.

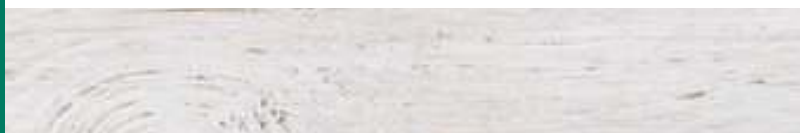
A 1-cup portion of pulses can provide more than 50 percent of your daily folate requirement.

4 Eating Pulses Helps to Maintain a Healthy Weight

Pulses are relatively low in calories but high in complex carbohydrates and fiber. That means they are digested slowly and provide a steady, slow-burning source of energy. Eating pulses provides a feeling of satiety and fullness and may help you eat less.

5 Pulses Can Lower Blood Cholesterol

Pulses are an excellent source of fiber, but what's especially great about pulses is that they contain both soluble and insoluble fiber. Soluble fiber helps remove dietary cholesterol from your body, helping to lower blood cholesterol levels and reduce your risk for heart disease. Plus, pulses—like all plant foods—are naturally cholesterol-free.





6 Pulses Star in the Mediterranean Diet

The Mediterranean diet is the traditional eating pattern of countries along the Mediterranean Sea. Rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, pulses, nuts, seeds and olive oil, the Mediterranean diet is considered one of the world's healthiest dietary patterns. Numerous studies have shown that the Mediterranean diet promotes health and longevity and may prevent chronic diseases like heart disease. If you're trying to follow a Mediterranean diet, remember that consuming pulses is a key part of this dietary pattern.

7 Pulses Help Manage Blood Sugars

Pulses are rich in complex, high-quality carbohydrates. Pulses have been found to have a low glycemic index (GI) and glycemic load (GL). Having a low GI and GL means that the carbohydrates in pulses are slowly digested and therefore have lesser effects on blood sugar and insulin levels. Elevated blood sugars can cause damage to the body's arteries and increases a person's risk for a heart attack or stroke. Eating a variety of foods that are low GI/GL, including pulses, is a smart way to manage blood sugars and maintain a healthy heart.



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