

“A” is for Apple.... and Antioxidants

When it comes to fruit, **apples are among the best** of the best. They offer great taste with fewer calories than many other fruits, they give you the biggest nutritional dose per gram, they have incredible antioxidant power, and they're portable — so you can eat them anytime, anywhere.

Apples are a **good source of vitamin C**, though they don't have many other vitamins. However, they make up for that with their strong disease-fighting ability, thanks to their high concentration of antioxidants. In this regard, they're comparable to blueberries, which are often touted as having the highest antioxidant levels of all fruits.

Among these disease blockers are **flavonoids** (found in the flesh as well as the skin of apples), which help keep blood vessels healthy,

reduce inflammation throughout the body, prevent DNA damage that can lead to cancer, and slow cancer cell growth and reproduction. The fiber in apples inhibits cancer cell growth as well, and lowers "bad" cholesterol. Research from Cornell University has recently suggested that apples may even help guard against Alzheimer's disease.

With all its benefits, this **low-cal fruit** (a medium apple has 80 calories) really does make a great daily snack. Apples come in hundreds of varieties, too, so your taste buds will never get bored. Many are **ideal for baking**, making it easy for you to include apples in dozens of sweet or savory recipes. Try dusting one with cinnamon and Splenda and popping it in the oven.

Apples are **available year-round**, but they're in their prime during the fall. Choose apples with smooth, clean, shiny skin. Avoid apples with dull skin, bruises, and punctures. To keep them fresh, store them in the refrigerator for up to two weeks.

So before you leave the house for the day, get in the habit of throwing an apple in your bag. And whenever you get a hankering for something crunchy, **grab an apple instead of that bag of chips.**

