Potential Health Benefits of Pomegranates

Once an imported rarity, we now regularly see mass pomegranate displays in fruiterers and supermarkets. So what is it about this ancient berry that has caused much interest to nutritionists?

A pomegranate is a sweet, tart fruit with thick, red skin. While the skin is not edible, it holds hundreds of juicy seeds that you can eat plain or sprinkle on salads, oatmeal, hummus, and other dishes.

Pomegranates are native to the Middle East (Persia) and grown for the last 500 years in California. Over the past ten years pomegranate orchards have appeared in the Murray–Darling Basin, from southern Queensland to southern New South Wales, northern Victoria, South Australia and in southern Western Australia. Pomegranates are grown on trees, some as tall as 5 metres and are generally considered drought resistant.

Since ancient years, Pomegranates have been used for years for their health benefits.

Health Benefits

Pomegranates are rich in antioxidants and flavonoids, both of which are known to prevent free radicals from damaging your cells. In some studies, pomegranates show potential to be effective in preventing prostate, breast, lung, and colon cancers. Additionally, preclinical studies on animals have shown that eating pomegranate can inhibit the growth of lung, skin, colon, and prostate tumours. More research is needed to understand the effects on humans.

Pomegranates can have up to three times more antioxidants than green tea or red wine. Antioxidants protect cells from damage, prevent diseases — such as cancer — and reduce inflammation and the effects of aging.

Additionally, other health benefits of pomegranates include heart health, atherosclerosis and diabetes. Studies have suggested that pomegranates can protect the heart in many ways, including lowering and reducing blood sugar levels. The build-up of cholesterol and fats in the arteries — is a common cause of heart disease. Pomegranate juice may help reduce low-density lipoprotein cholesterol — 'bad cholesterol' — that clogs arteries. It can also increase high-density lipoprotein cholesterol — 'good cholesterol' — which lowers the risk of strokes and heart attacks.

Geoff