Health Benefits from Cucumbers

Many a gardener has gone out during summer to their vegetable garden in order to grab that delicious little green cylinder known as the cucumber. The thought of either placing slices of this veggie between two pieces of bread, eating a salted slice by itself, or perhaps pickling a whole one has long delighted the palate. Few gardeners however realize the health benefits received by consuming this green "pill" of health provided by mother nature. These low-calorie veggies contain many nutritional benefits including hydration and valuable nutrients.

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Hydration: Cucumbers are composed of 95% water. Consuming them allows for hydration of the body during those hot summer days. In fact, it has been shown that one cup of cucumber slices is nearly as quenching as one glass of water.

Cancer Prevention: Cucumbers contain cucurbacins and lignans which are phytonutrient compound associated with anti-cancer benefits. **Cucurbacins** block signaling pathways for cancer cell proliferation and survival. They inhibit pancreatic cancer cell lines by 50% and increase apoptosis ("death by suicide") of these cell lines. **Lignans** have been shown to be effective in the control of cardiovascular disease. There are also promising signs on the cancer prevention front. A study of nearly 800 American women found that those with high lignans intake had a lower risk of ovarian cancer.

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Skin Nourishment: Cucumbers and cucumber derived products provide a cooling and soothing effect that decreases swelling, irritation, and inflammation when used topically. When placed on the eyes it decreases morning "puffiness" and even alleviates sunburn when placed on affected areas.

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Bone Health: Cucumbers are an excellent source of Vitamin K which has been shown to help prevent the potential fracturing of bones. One cup of cucumber slices contains 19% of the recommended daily intake of Vitamin K.

Nutrients: Cucumbers are naturally low in calories, carbohydrates sodium, fat, and cholesterol. One cup of cucumbers contains 16 calories and the daily requirements of the following nutrients: 4% pottasium, 3% fiber, and 4% Vitamin C.

REFERENCES: www.livescience.com/51000-cucumber-nutrition.html