

# Chow Line

News from the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences

## An apple a day OK, but enjoy other fruit as well

**Although a lot of my health-conscious friends push me to try produce that I've never even heard of before, I'm partial to the good old-fashioned apple. What can I tell them about the apple's health benefits that will get them off my back?**

First, there's a lot to be said for eating a wide variety of produce. No matter how much you prefer an apple over, say, a persimmon, different types of fruits and vegetables offer different benefits. Your body will thank you for eating a broad range of red, orange, yellow, green, white, blue and purple fruits and vegetables on a regular basis.

That said, apples are nothing to sneeze at. A small apple (about 5 ounces, or about 2.5 inches in diameter) is considered one cup of fruit, which puts you well on your way toward the 1.5 to 2 cups of fruit that the Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends that everyone enjoys each day.

A small apple has just 75 calories. An added bonus: It has 4 grams of fiber, including both the soluble and insoluble types that provide different health benefits. Apples also provide a good helping of vitamin C as well as some potassium. Not a bad package for something you can easily hold in your hand and chew on.

In addition, the polyphenols in apples have generated quite a bit of interest within the scientific community. Polyphenols are a group of micronutrients present in fruits, vegetables, tea, coffee, and some other plant-based foods and beverages. Although similar to each other, they have slight variations in their chemical structures that affect how they work in the body.

Polyphenols in apples have been studied for years, but a study published earlier this year suggests



photo: iStock

a way that one type of polyphenol in apples can benefit your health. The study, published in *Molecular Nutrition and Food Research*, focused on something called "vascular endothelial growth factor," or VEGF. When present in large concentrations, VEGF can increase the risk of both tumors and blood vessel plaques. The researchers found that apple polyphenols called procyanidin oligomers directly interact with VEGF, potentially blocking it from causing damage.

In addition, apples provide the antioxidant quercetin, which helps protect the cardiovascular system and is associated with lung health.

As with most fruits and vegetables, much of the good stuff in apples lies within and just beneath the skin, so don't peel. And, it appears that different apple varieties have varying levels of micronutrients, with a 2005 study identifying Red Delicious and Idared apples among the top performers that were studied.

For more about apples, see the Farm to Health resources page of Ohio State University Extension's Local Foods website, [localfoods.osu.edu/resources](http://localfoods.osu.edu/resources). It offers information on a variety of fruits and vegetables, including apples.

But remember, even though apples provide a host of health benefits, they can't offer everything. Every once in a while, take your friends up on their offer and try something new. Whatever it is, it might become your next favorite fruit.

Oct. 9, 2015

By Martha Filipic  
614-292-9833  
[filipic.3@osu.edu](mailto:filipic.3@osu.edu)

**Editor:** This column was reviewed by Dan Remley, Ohio State University Extension field specialist in Food, Nutrition and Wellness.

*Chow Line is a service of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences and its outreach and research arms, Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1043, or [filipic.3@osu.edu](mailto:filipic.3@osu.edu).*

**College Marketing and Communications**  
2021 Coffey Road  
Columbus, OH 43210-1043  
614-292-2011

208 Research Services Building  
1680 Madison Ave.  
Wooster, OH 44691-4096  
330-263-3780

© 2015, The Ohio State University

CFAES provides research and related educational programs to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis. For more information: [go.osu.edu/cfaesdiversity](http://go.osu.edu/cfaesdiversity).