

Potatoes in the diet - the essential guide



Introduction

Starchy foods such as the humble potato are a good source of energy and the main source of a range of nutrients in our diet. They should make up just over a third of the food you eat, according to Public Health England.

Nutritional facts:

- Potatoes are naturally fat free
- Potatoes are naturally low in saturated fat
- Potatoes are naturally low in sugars
- Potatoes are naturally salt free
- Potatoes with skins are a natural source of fibre

Potatoes contribute 12 per cent of total fibre intake for UK adults and in fact there is strong evidence that eating plenty of fibre is associated with a lower risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and bowel cancer. Eating potatoes with skins on, as well as other sources of dietary fibre, such as whole grain foods, pulses, fruit and vegetables, can help consumers achieve the recommended 30g a day of fibre intake.

So we thought it was time to gather together all the most important, factual knowledge and EU approved nutrition and health claims that can be made for the versatile, sustainable, tasty potato.





What is the starchy food group?

- Potatoes are part of the starchy food group
- Starchy foods are a good source of energy and the main source of a range of nutrients in our diet
- We should eat some starchy foods every day as part of a healthy, balanced diet
- Starchy food should make up just over a third of the food we eat
- Cooked and cooled potatoes produce more resistant starch, which has potential gut health benefits

Potatoes importance to the UK diet

- Potatoes contribute 14 per cent to vitamin C, 13 per cent to vitamin B6 and 9 per cent to folate intakes in the diets of adults in the UK
- In the UK, potatoes contribute 14 per cent of total fibre intake in adolescents, and 12 per cent of total fibre intake in adults

Potatoes and fibre

- There is strong evidence that eating plenty of fibre is associated with a lower risk of heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes and bowel cancer. Eating potatoes with skins on, as well as other sources of dietary fibre, such as whole grain foods, pulses, fruit and vegetables, can help consumers achieve the recommended 30g a day of fibre intake
- Potatoes contribute 12 per cent to fibre intake in the UK
- Peeling potatoes will decrease the fibre content, so it is better to eat potatoes with the skin on

The importance of individual nutrients

Potatoes are naturally a source of potassium

- Potassium can help maintain normal blood pressure
- Potassium supports normal nerve function
- Potassium supports normal muscle function

Potatoes are naturally a source of thiamine

- Thiamine supports the release of energy from foods
- Thiamine contributes to normal nerve function
- Thiamine helps normal psychological function
- Thiamine contributes to normal heart function

Potatoes and sustainability

- Potatoes and potato products from Britain are a sustainable food option
- When stored correctly, eaten with skins on, or bought frozen, they generate zero food waste

And on a final note!

- Potatoes are versatile and can be cooked quickly in a variety of ways
- Potatoes are gluten free
- Potatoes are affordable and accessible to all

Lets face it, potatoes taste great! Don't believe us? Try out some new exciting recipes here lovepotatoes.co.uk (because we love potatoes. You love potatoes. How could you not love potatoes? Seriously?)

Information sources

- Brief Guide to Health and Nutrition Claims in relation to potatoes 29 March 2018
- Healthy Eating Initiatives – a report written for the Potato Council by the British Nutrition Foundation (BNF), Spring 2014
- Potato A basis for human nutrition and health benefits Hutton 2018
- National Diet and Nutrition Survey – Public Health England
- Public Health England – EatWell Guide
- NHS Choices

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