

BANANA'S

Containing three natural sugars - sucrose, fructose and glucose - combined with fiber, a banana gives an instant, sustained and substantial boost of energy.

Research has proved that just two bananas provide enough energy for a strenuous 90-minute workout. No wonder the banana is the number one fruit with the world's leading athletes. But energy isn't the only way a banana can help us keep fit. It can also help overcome or prevent a substantial number of illnesses and conditions making it a must to add to your daily diet.

Anemia

High in iron, bananas can stimulate the production of hemoglobin in the blood and so helps in cases of anemia.

Blood Pressure

This unique tropical fruit is extremely high in potassium yet low in salt making it the perfect to beat blood pressure. So much so, the US Food and Drug Administration has just allowed the banana industry to make official claims for the fruit's ability to reduce the risk of blood pressure and stroke.

Brain Power

200 students at a Twickenham (Middlesex) school were helped through their exams this year by eating bananas at breakfast, break and lunch in a bid to boost their brain power. Research has shown that the potassium-packed fruit can assist learning by making pupils more alert.

<http://media.www.thepenn.org/media/storage/paper930/news/2006/02/17/Variety/Go.Bananas-2231362.shtml>

Constipation

High in fiber, including bananas in the diet can help restore normal bowel action, helping to overcome the problem without resorting to laxatives.

Depression

According to a recent survey undertaken by MIND amongst people suffering from depression, many felt much better after eating a banana. This is because bananas contain tryptophan, a type of protein that the body converts into serotonin known to make you relax, improve your mood and generally make you feel happier.

Lethargy

One of the quickest ways of curing lethargy and fatigue is to make a banana milkshake, sweetened with honey.

The banana calms the stomach and, with the help of the honey, builds up depleted blood sugar levels, while the milk soothes and re-hydrates your system.

Heart-burn

Bananas have a natural antacid effect in the body so if you suffer from heart-burn, try eating a banana for soothing relief.

Morning Sickness

Snacking on bananas between meals helps to keep blood sugar levels up and avoid morning sickness.

Mosquito bites

Before reaching for the insect bite cream, try rubbing the affected area with the inside of a banana skin. Many people find it amazingly successful at reducing swelling and irritation.

Nerves

Bananas are high in B vitamins that help calm the nervous system.

Weight Control

Bananas are also low in calories and fat, plus they have a high water content and potassium levels. A diet high in potassium foods and lower in sodium-loaded processed foods can help reduce water weight.

PMS

Forget the pills - eat a banana. The vitamin B6 it contains regulates blood glucose levels, which can affect your mood.

Ulcers

The banana is used as the dietary food against intestinal disorders because of its soft texture and smoothness. It is the only raw fruit that can be eaten without distress in over-chronic ulcer cases. It also neutralizes over-acidity and reduces irritation by coating the lining of the stomach.

Temperature control

Many other cultures see bananas as a 'cooling' fruit that can lower both the physical and emotional temperature of expectant mothers. In Thailand, for example, pregnant women eat bananas to ensure their baby is born with a cool temperature.

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)

Bananas can help SAD sufferers because they contain the natural mood enhancer, tryptophan.

Smoking

Bananas can also help people trying to give up smoking. The B6, B12 they contain, as well as the potassium and magnesium found in them, help the body recover from the effects of nicotine withdrawal.

Stress

Potassium is a vital mineral, which helps normalize the heartbeat, sends oxygen to the brain and regulates your body's water-balance. When we are stressed, our metabolic rate rises, there by reducing our potassium levels. These can be re-balanced with the help of a high-potassium banana snack.

Strokes

According to research in 'The New England Journal of Medicine' eating bananas as part of a regular diet can cut the risk of death by strokes by as much as 40%!

Warts

Those keen on natural alternatives swear that, if you want to kill off a wart, take a piece of banana skin and place it on the wart, with the yellow side out. Carefully hold the skin in place with a plaster or surgical tape!

So you see a banana really is a natural remedy for many ills. When you compare it to an apple, it has four times the protein, twice the carbohydrate, three times the phosphorus, five times the vitamin A and iron, and twice the other vitamins and minerals. It is also rich in potassium and is one of the best value foods around.

Calories in a banana: The calorie content of bananas are low to medium. Most of the calories in a banana come from carbohydrates, both naturally forming simple sugars and starch forms its carbohydrate content. Its interesting to note that the composition of carbohydrate calories change on ripening, the sugar levels rise and the starch levels fall as a banana ripens. It means that bananas are probably easier to digest the more ripe and yellow the fruit becomes.

The protein calories in a banana only make up about one percent of its total calorie content however this is much higher than the fat calories in the fruit which is less than one half percent.

The calories in a banana are digested slowly and help supply the body with a steady source of energy. Bananas are great for an energy boost if eaten about an hour before physical activity.

| Banana | weight | Protein | Carbs | Fat | Banana Calories |
|---------------------------------|--------|---------|-------|-------|-----------------|
| Banana Medium weighed with skin | 130g | 1.1g | 21g | 0.27g | 86 cals |
| Banana Large weighed with skin | 170g | 2g | 39g | 0.5g | 162 calories |
| Banana average flesh only | 114g | 1.4g | 17.5g | 0.2g | 108 calories |
| Banana Milk Shake | 100 ml | 18 g | - | - | 140 cals |