

## **Vegetable Myths – Part Two**

As part of our continuing series on nutrition for seniors, we present some more vegetable myths and facts.

### ***The more colourful a vegetable is, the healthier it is***

Check out our Homecare Library entry on Apples, Pears, Bananas and Strokes where we point out the value of white-fleshed fruit. Well, the same idea applies sometimes with vegetables.

White cabbage is one of the most vitamin- and nutrient –packed foods available, containing Vitamins A, B, C and K, as well as calcium, iron and fibre. White cauliflower is basically a bundled chunk of anti-oxidants. Celery has protein and calcium (in addition to being virtually free of calories). Red and pink pinto beans have nothing that the white variety doesn't have.

### ***Avocados are too fatty to be healthy***

For a healthy diet, it is important to reduce the amount of saturated fat you consume. Avocados, however, contain mono-unsaturated fat. This type of fat has a positive effect on blood cholesterol levels. Of course, eating too much of anything (even healthy food) causes weight gain. The same is true of avocados. Avocados are also used to make guacamole, which can lead to an increase in consumption of various chips, pita and breads, thus causing weight gain.

### ***Potato chips count as a vegetable***

Potatoes are in the vegetable group of the food pyramid. Potato chips are not. Potato chips are cooked in oil and are extremely high in fat. They definitely cannot be considered a vegetable.

### ***Broccoli cures ulcers***

There is no proof that broccoli cures stomach ulcers. However recent studies have shown that sulforaphane, a compound found in broccoli, may help stop the growth of and even destroy ovarian cancer cells.

### ***Salads consisting entirely of greens are the healthiest***

While greens are very healthy, adding other ingredients to your salad is healthier than having greens alone. Tomatoes contain lycopene, a nutrient linked to lower risk of heart disease and cancer. Purple vegetables like eggplant contain powerful antioxidants that help reduce the risk of heart disease and improve brain function. Radishes contain indoles, which have been shown to prevent the metastases of breast cancer.

***You can burn all the calories just by eating it.***

Celery has six calories per stalk. The body does not expend more calories than that to chew and digest it. Nevertheless, it is a healthy choice and a weight-friendly food. Celery is a great source of fibre that can help fill you up. Be sure to avoid high calorie dips.

***Becoming a vegetarian will make you lose weight.***

Research shows that vegetarians do eat fewer calories and less fat than non-vegetarians. A diet plan with a low fat content may be helpful for weight loss. However, it is possible to be a vegetarian and still consume high-fat, high-calorie or high-sugar foods (French fries, various high fat cheeses, candy, chips, etc.) which cause weight gain.

Next week, we'll bust some fruit myths.