

How Bananas are Better than Pills for Treating Depression, Constipation and More

By: Ethan A. Huff, Natural News

They're often the fruit of choice for athletes looking to boost their electrolyte levels and get a quick energy boost, but bananas are a whole lot more than just a sweet treat or a pleasant addition to a morning smoothie. Rich in vitamins, minerals and other beneficial compounds, bananas can also serve as a natural remedy for treating depression, promoting regularity, boosting brain power and calming the nerves, among other important functions within the body.

A closer look at the scientific literature on bananas reveals a host of little-known benefits associated with eating the fruit. Everything from regulating blood pressure and healing a damaged gut to relieving the symptoms of arthritis and even battling drug addiction have been attributed to this simple fruit, easily labeling it as one of the most amazing, widely available and inexpensive superfruits known to man.

Eating bananas can help relieve depression and improve one's mood

As bananas contain tryptophan, the same compound in turkey meat that promotes a calm, relaxed mood, bananas are also said to aid in relieving the symptoms of depression. Combined with the benefits of B vitamins, the conversion of tryptophan into serotonin, the so-called "happy hormone," helps improve mood and overall feelings of well-being.

"Keeping your B vitamin intake up could ward off depression as you age," explains Emily Main in a Rodale News article. "[W]hen you combine food sources of B vitamins with the added boost of supplements, the positive effects on depression are more pronounced."

The fiber in bananas helps promote regularity

Like many other whole fruits and vegetables, bananas are an excellent source of soluble fiber. Fiber is necessary for maintaining regularity. Remembering to incorporate bananas into your regular diet can help you avoid constipation and other intestine- and bowel-related conditions.

"Bananas help restore normal bowel function, especially if you have diarrhea," explains one report. "This fruit also has lots of fiber to aid digestion."

Boost your brainpower with bananas

In addition to B vitamins, bananas also contain high levels of potassium, an electrolyte mineral used by the heart, kidneys and other body organs for normal function. Brain neurons rely on high levels of potassium, a lack of which can lead to "brain fog" and other cognitive problems.

"A 2013 study published in the *Journal of Neuroscience Letters* researched potassium supplementation and levels of free radicals in the brain," reads a *SFGate* report on potassium and memory.

"After 20 days of supplementation with potassium, the levels of harmful free radicals decreased significantly, reducing the amount of oxidative damage that occurred in the test subjects. Because oxidative damage leads to decreased brain function, potassium counteracts this effect and prevents brain damage."

B vitamins in bananas help calm the nervous system

Of the eight known B vitamins, bananas are an excellent source of five of them -- thiamin (B1), riboflavin (B2), niacin (B3), pyridoxine (B6) and folate (B9). The basic food source of the nervous system, these B vitamins aid the body in digesting and using other nutrients, as well as supporting a healthy heart, muscles and nerves.

B vitamins "help produce and maintain new cells and are an essential part of many biochemical reactions in your body," explains a report on bananas written by Joanne Marie for *SFGate*. "Bananas contain useful amounts of these B vitamins, ranging from 785 micrograms of niacin to 24 micrograms of folate in one medium banana."

Sources for this article include:

<http://www.undergroundhealth.com>

<http://www.healingfoodreference.com/banana.h...>

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