



Amazing ALMOND

Why settle for a paltry peanut when you can munch on a power-packed almond?

By: Soumya Jain

The tear drop shaped almond is considered to be healthiest and most nutritious amongst all nuts. As society becomes more health-conscious, these crunchy nuts are prized for being tasty, filling and good for the skin. They are an excellent source of vitamin E and magnesium, while also supplying a variety of other vitamins and protein. From the Bible to King Tut, almonds have forged a path through history, still remaining relevant and delicious.

Go nuts

Almonds have uncountable health benefits. Nutritionist Geetu Amarnani says, "From mind to body to skin, it is beneficial for all. Almonds are full of proteins, fibre, calcium, magnesium, potassium, vitamin E and other antioxidants and phytochemicals. They help to promote good health, especially when they are part of a healthy diet consisting of fruits, vegetables and low-fat whole grain products."

Regular consumption of almonds is known to reduce cholesterol levels in an individual. Dr Seema Puri, Nutritionist and Gerontologist, conducted a research where a group of 30 individuals were administered with 30g of almonds everyday. After three months, it was concluded that almonds improved dietary adequacy and there were no significant differences in blood pressure levels pre and post-supplementation. Dr Puri



A FEW QUICK SERVING IDEAS

- Add punch to plain yogurt by mixing in some chopped almonds and dried fruit.
- Enhance a healthy sauté of curried vegetables with sliced almonds.
- Add some almond butter to a breakfast shake to boost its taste and protein content.
- Almonds and apple slices make a wonderfully simple, on-the-go power snack.
- Make a delightful cold rice salad with almonds, fresh garden peas and currants.
- Add sliced almonds to chicken salad.

Courtesy: Geetu Amarnani, Nutritionist



explains, "There was a significant increase in HDL (good cholesterol), and small reductions in triglycerides and LDL (bad cholesterol) levels post-supplementation of almonds." Almonds contain monounsaturated and some polyunsaturated fats which help to lower the bad cholesterol, not affecting the good cholesterol levels.

Consumption of almonds also helps to lower the risk of cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease and other chronic illnesses. Amarnani advises that the health benefits of almonds are usually derived by eating one ounce, which is 20-25 almonds, or about one handful, in a day. Soak four to five almonds overnight and eat them first thing in the morning to enhance brain power. The high magnesium, calcium and potassium content in almonds make them

ALMOND BEAUTY RECIPES

ALMOND OATMEAL FACIAL SCRUB

Ingredients: 1/4 cup of oatmeal, 1/4 cup of almonds, 1 tablespoon cornstarch

Method: Add all ingredients to a food processor or blender and process till the mixture becomes a finely textured powder. Funnel into small glass jars. To use the almond oatmeal facial scrub, place a teaspoon or two of the powder in your hand and add enough water to form a paste. Dab onto face with your fingers and gently distribute with soft circular motions, avoiding the eyes. Rinse well with water.

ALMOND FACIAL SCRUB

Grind almonds. Take two teaspoons of the powder and blend it with 10 drops of honey and one egg white. Apply it on the face and let it dry for 20 minutes. Wipe it off with a damp cloth.

HONEY ALMOND SCRUB RECIPE

Ingredients: 2 tablespoons of honey, 3 tablespoons finely ground almonds, Juice of 1/2 orange, A freshly ground mint leaf (optional)

Method: Mix all ingredients together thoroughly and apply on face.

Courtesy: Geetu Amarnani, Nutritionist

better than any other snacking nuts, providing instant energy, easy digestibility and high absorbance of minerals and vitamins.

A regular intake of almond in its natural form can help a number of diseases. Anaemia can be cured with sufficient amounts of copper, which, when combined with iron and vitamins, can accelerate the growth of red blood cells in the body.



Almond contains about 1.15mg copper per 100 grams. Almonds provide almost all the nutrients that help increase bone mineral density, making a strong skeletal system, needed by athletes, growing children and, of course, elderly people. Hence, it can fight the onslaught of osteoporosis.

Amarnani says, "After dinner, it is a good idea to eat at least 10 skinned almonds. This increases dietary fibre and eases constipation. For those unable to consume the nuts, it is a good idea to drink one teaspoon of almond oil mixed in about half a cup of warm milk to cure indigestion. A mixture of powdered almonds and orange juice, drunk on a regular basis, helps treat bronchial problems, irritating cough and throat infections."

Almonds are also very good at increasing blood flow to the vital organs of the body. So interestingly, in many cultures, they are used as aphrodisiacs. Munching on about a dozen almonds every day ensures a step up in a person's love life.

Oil for skin and health

The benefits of almond oil are aplenty. Alpha-tocopherol, a major source of vitamin E, makes almonds best for healthy hair and skin. Indeed, many use almond oil for rich, healthy hair and a flawless, wrinkle free skin. Manganese and phosphorus

contained in almonds help to keep a healthy, sharp and sound brain, which is why a regular massage with almond oil is said to have a great effect on memory and power of concentration. Dr Jairam Nair, Spa Manager of Amatrra Spa and A+ MediSpa, says, "Almond oil is good for the skin because it is more stable (does not become rancid) than those oils that have a higher content of essential fatty acids. It nourishes hair and smoothes hair cuticles, making them long, strong and thick. Massaging with almond oil adds shine to the hair and controls hair-fall."

The list of almond oil's beauty aiding properties is almost endless. It can be used as a mild and effective bleaching agent when mixed with milk cream and ground with the paste of fresh rosebuds. If applied daily, this paste keeps the skin fresh and young looking, delays the appearance of wrinkles, blackheads, dryness and even pimples. The toning effect of the oil works wonders for mature skin. In case of steam burns, application of almond oil immediately cools off the area and protects it from infection of any sort.

Amarnani adds, "In case of skin irritations or chronic conditions like eczema, soreness, itchiness, dryness and inflammation, almond oil is the best treatment. It gets absorbed quickly, leaving the skin soft and toned. Hence, almond oil is ideal massage oil."

Spa it up

Due to its plethora of health and beauty benefits, it is no surprise that almond is used a lot in spas. The ancient healing science of Ayurveda also identifies with its properties. Dr Nair says, "In Ayurveda, almond is considered a nutritive for brain and nervous system. It is said to induce high intellectual level and longevity. It is extracted by cold process and is considered a nutritive aphrodisiac both for massage and internal consumption. Recent studies have shown that the constituents of almond have anti-inflammatory, immunity boosting and anti-hepatotoxicity effects." Being stable, neutral carrier oil, almond oil is mixed with other oils for spa treatments.

The Amatrra Spa Boutique sells 'Almond Microrefiner'. It is a soft face polisher with almonds and herb granules. The product is especially good for dry skin, leaving it smooth and radiant. So instead of gorging on high-calorie food for that mid-day snack, crunch some almonds to benefit from them. 

