

Nourishing News - Are Herbs Beneficial to Health?



Herbs have been used for centuries for medicinal purposes. Herbs are from the aromatic leaves of plants such as *rosemary*, mint, basil, parsley, dill, sage and *thyme*. Research regarding the health benefits of herbs is ongoing and some *studies* show evidence of a potential positive impact on health. Although much of the research is not definitive, herbs are nutrient-rich and can enhance the flavor. Try adding herbs to your meals to enjoy the added health *benefits* that they may provide.

Health Benefits of Herbs

Herbs contain substances that may have a positive impact on health. Here are some herbs with potential health benefits:

- ◆ Basil - may boost immunity, while decreasing *bacteria*, yeast and mold growth. Although the studies are small, *basil* may decrease blood sugar and reduce anxiety.
- ◆ Cilantro - possible benefits to brain health, reduces *anxiety* and lowers blood sugar. It has an antimicrobial compound that may help protect against infections.
- ◆ Dill - rich in antioxidants, may reduce the risk of stroke, heart disease and lower LDL cholesterol.
- ◆ Mint - may improve digestion, reduce abdominal bloating and pain associated with *irritable* bowel syndrome.
- ◆ Oregano - rich in antioxidants, may help fight bacteria, and could reduce the risk of cancer and decrease inflammation.
- ◆ Parsley - an antioxidant that is rich in Vitamin C and K. Vitamin K helps blood clot and supports bone health. Parsley may decrease the risk of stroke and chronic medical conditions, including heart disease, diabetes and cancer.
- ◆ Rosemary - enhances *memory* and may reduce allergy symptoms and nasal congestion due to anti-inflammatory properties.
- ◆ Sage - may improve brain function and memory.



WORD SEARCH Find the *bold italic* words

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Fresh Herbs or Supplements?

It is best to use *fresh* or dried herbs in food and beverages instead of taking supplements. Herbal supplements are not regulated, may have potential side effects and safety concerns. In addition they may interfere with medication.

Using & Storing Herbs

Herbs add a *variety* of flavor to food without adding salt. If you substitute fresh with dried herbs, use 1 part dried to 3-parts fresh. It is best to start with a little and add more as needed. A little goes a long way! Here are some common pairings:

- ◆ Basil, Cilantro, Parsley or Mint - add fresh leaves to salads. Mint can be added to water.
- ◆ Rosemary or Sage - pair with chicken, turkey, *lamb* or pork, mashed potatoes and butternut squash.
- ◆ Sage, Dill or Parsley - enhance the flavor of fish and potatoes.
- ◆ Oregano or Basil - add to pasta or tomato salad.



Store in airtight containers in a cool dark place. The shelf-life is 1-2 years depending on type, processing and *storage*. They can be used when past their prime; however, will lose most of their *aroma* and flavor.

