

HEALTHY EATING TIPS > Compiled by Beatrice Nakibuuka

Eat pineapples to boost your immunity

Pineapples can be eaten fresh or juiced and their health and medicinal benefits include their ability to improve respiratory health, cure coughs and colds, improve digestion, strengthen bones, improve oral health, boost eye health, reduce inflammation,



prevent cancer and improve the immune system.

Immune support: Bridget Kezaabu, a freelance nutritionist, observes that pineapples contain vitamin C, a primary water-soluble antioxidant that fights cell damage which is a helpful fighter against problems such as heart disease and joint pain. The vitamin also helps to reduce mucus in the throat and nose during a cold.

"The vitamin C and antioxidants in the pineapple also reduce the risk of age-related macular degeneration, a disease that affects the eyes as people age."

She adds that, "Pineapples have a good amount of manganese which is a trace mineral essential in the strengthening of bones, as well as their growth and repair."

Digestion: Many people have a problem with protein digestion and undigested

proteins in the digestive system can form compounds that are absorbed into the bloodstream, creating allergic reactions and causing an inflammation, tiredness, general muscle weakness and a headache.

Kezaabu remarks, "Undigested proteins are dangerous because they are involved in forming uric acid crystals that cause gout and other forms of joint pain. Pineapples have bromelain, a unique protein-digesting enzyme contained in the core which cleaves the protein bonds making protein foods easier to digest."

Pineapples contain dietary fiber which is essential for keeping intestines healthy and preventing conditions such as constipation, diarrhoea, irritable bowel syndrome.

Cancer Inhibitor: Bromelain is also useful in treating cancer especially mouth, throat, breast and colon cancers because

it can reduce tumour growth due to the antioxidant potential in the vitamin C, A and the beta carotene content.

It also stops blood plaques from sticking together and may be useful for people who are at risk of dangerous blood clots.

She notes that, "People taking antibiotics, anticoagulants, blood thinners, anticonvulsants, insomnia drugs and antidepressants should be careful not to eat too much pineapple because it interferes with the drugs."

Eating unripe pineapple or drinking unripe pineapple juice is dangerous as it becomes toxic to humans and can lead to severe diarrhoea and vomiting. "Eating a lot of pineapple can also cause tenderness of the tongue but can resolve itself within a few hours but for if it does not or develop difficulties in breathing; you may be allergic to pineapples. Seek medical care immediately," Kezaabu says.