

# The Benefits of the Fig

The fig is the first fruit specifically named in the Bible. Genesis 3:7 states, *"Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings."* In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve used fig leaves for clothing. Today we can find these sweet fruits mentioned in writings as far back as 3000 BC.

The fig held great importance. In biblical terms, the fig is a symbol of peace, prosperity and great joy. We read in 1 Kings 4:25: *"And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, each man under his vine and his fig tree, from Dan as far as Beersheba, all the days of Solomon."*

There was a time, when Hezekiah, the king of Judah, was "sick even to death." He was visited by the prophet Isaiah who ordered that they should *"take a lamp of figs, and apply it as a poultice on the boil, and he shall recover."* (Isaiah 38:21). The fig treatment was so effective that Hezekiah lived and ruled for another fifteen years.

The benzaldehyde in the fig is a powerful anti-cancer compound, and God knew that it was the solution to King Hezekiah's illness thousands of years ago.

## Health Benefits

### Help Lower High Blood Pressure

Figs are a good source of potassium, a mineral that helps to control blood pressure. Since many people not only do not eat enough fruits and vegetables, but do consume high amounts of sodium as salt is frequently added to processed foods, they may be deficient in potassium. Low intake of potassium-rich foods, especially when coupled with a high intake of sodium, can lead to hypertension. Because figs provide potassium and calcium, experts recommend them for people with high blood pressure. Both minerals, in combination with eating less sodium, keep your blood pressure under control.

### A Sweet Way to Lose Weight

Figs are a good source of dietary fiber. Fiber and fiber-rich foods may have a positive effect on weight management. In one study, women who increased their fiber intake with supplements significantly decreased their energy intake, yet their hunger and satiety scores did not change. Figs may be helpful in a weight management program. They are very filling so you would decrease your consumption of other things if you ate more figs. They are not super-high in calories or fat. You get just 48 calories and almost no fat in every dried fig.

### An Insulin-Lowering Leaf in Diabetes

If you are worried about high blood sugar but still want a tasty treat, look no further than the fig. Figs are not a high carbohydrate food so they would be a good thing for

someone who has diabetes to consume. Eating chewy, delicious figs is a tasty way to get more fiber. And fiber will help lower your glucose.

You probably do not think about the leaves of the fig tree as one of fig's edible parts. But in some cultures, fig leaves are a common part of the menu, and for good reason. The leaves of the fig have repeatedly been shown to have anti-diabetic properties and can actually reduce the amount of insulin needed by persons with diabetes who require insulin injections. In one study, a liquid extract made from fig leaves was simply added to the breakfast of insulin-dependent diabetic subjects in order to produce this insulin-lowering effect.

### **Bone Density Promoter**

Figs are a fruit source of calcium (79 milligrams in an 8 oz-wt serving), a mineral that has many functions including promoting bone density. Additionally, figs' potassium may also counteract the increased urinary calcium loss caused by the high-salt diets typical of most Americans, thus helping to further prevent bones from thinning out at a fast rate.

### **Cardiovascular Effects**

In animal studies, fig leaves have been shown to lower levels of triglycerides (a form in which fats circulate in the bloodstream), while in *in vitro* studies, fig leaves inhibited the growth of certain types of cancer cells. Researchers have not yet determined exactly which substances in fig leaves are responsible for these remarkable healing effects. Besides their potassium and fiber content, figs emerged from food ranking systems as a good source of the trace mineral manganese.

### **Guards Against Cancer**

When you make figs part of your diet, you also welcome a host of polyphenols, those naturally occurring plant chemicals that act as antioxidants. These crusaders go after the free radicals that can damage your body and cause cancer. That is one reason nearly every major health organization encourages you to eat more fruits and vegetables.

Other possible anti-cancer agents found in figs include substances called coumarins, studied for treating skin and prostate cancers and benzaldehyde, which might have anti-tumor powers.

### **Foils Constipation**

The main advantage of eating figs is still their astonishingly high fiber content. Fiber can improve the digestive tract. It has a laxative effect on people and speeds up the movement through the digestive tract. So say hello to figs and good bye to irregularity.

### **Additional reading:**

#### **The Functional Food Properties of Figs**

<http://www.aaccnet.org/funcfood/pdfs/99-0122-01f.pdf>

#### **The Fig: A Fruit Whose Perfection Has Only Recently Been Revealed**

[http://www.harunyahya.com/articles/70the\\_fig.html](http://www.harunyahya.com/articles/70the_fig.html)

<http://www.healthvitaminsguide.com/natural-nutrients/fig.htm>

<http://www.bellybytes.com/bytes/figs.shtml>