

Consumption of Legumes

Anjanapura V Raghu

Associate Professor, Department of Basic Science, Center for Emerging Technology, Jain Global Campus Jain University Bangalore, India

Accepted on 26th April, 2021

Legumes are controversial in certain circles. Some people even prefer to eliminate them from their diet. However, legumes are a staple food in many cultures. Thus, you'll ponder whether they're beneficial or harmful. This article explains whether legumes are good or bad for your health. Legumes have an interesting nutritional profile and are an upscale source of healthy fibers and protein

What are legumes?

The Leguminosae consists of plants that produce a pod with seeds inside. The term "legume" is employed to explain the seeds of those plants. Common edible legumes include lentils, peas, chickpeas, beans, soybeans, and peanuts.

Rich in both protein and fiber: Calories: 230, Protein: 18 grams, Fiber: 16 grams, Carbs: 40 grams, Iron: 37% of the Daily Value (DV), Folate: 90% of the DV, Magnesium: 17% of the DV, Potassium: 16% of the DV

What's more, an equivalent amount offers over 10% of the DV for vitamins B1, B3, B5, and B6, also as phosphorus, zinc, copper, and manganese. Legumes are among the simplest plant-based sources of protein. They're not only highly nutritious but also cheap, which makes them a staple in many developing countries.

Contain antinutrients

The nutritional quality of legumes is hampered by certain compounds.

Raw legumes contain antinutrients, which may interfere with digestion and therefore the absorption of other nutrients.

Phytic acid

Phytic acid, or phytate, is an antioxidant found altogether edible plant seeds, including legumes. It impairs the absorption of iron, zinc, and calcium from an equivalent meal and should increase the danger of mineral deficiencies in people that believe legumes or other high-phytate foods as a dietary staple. However, this is often only relevant when meat intake is low and high-phytate foods regularly structure an outsized part of meals — which is common in developing countries.

People who regularly eat meat aren't in danger of mineral deficiencies caused by phytic acid. You can reduce legumes' phytic acid content through several methods, including soaking, sprouting, and fermentation.

Lectins

Lectins are a family of proteins which will constitute up to 10% of the entire protein content of legumes. They resist digestion and should affect the cells lining your intestinal tract. One well-studied lectin is phytohemagglutinin, which is found in red kidney beans. It's toxic in high amounts, and a number of other incidents of poisoning are reported after consumption of raw or improperly cooked kidney beans. In most other edible legumes, the quantity of lectins isn't high enough to cause symptoms. That said, beans should only be eaten fully cooked and ready. Soaking them overnight and boiling them at 212°F (100°C) for a minimum of 10 minutes degrades phytohemagglutinin and other lectins.

Rich in healthy fibers

Legumes are particularly rich in healthy fibers, like resistant starch and soluble fibers. Both types pass undigested through your stomach and little intestine until they reach your colon, where they feed your friendly gut bacteria.

Unpleasant side effects of those fibers include gas and bloating, but they also help form short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs), like butyrate, which can improve colon health and reduce your risk of carcinoma. What's more, both resistant starch and soluble fibers assist you feel full. Additionally, they're very effective at moderating blood glucose levels after meals and should improve insulin sensitivity.

Other health benefits of legumes

Legumes are linked to varied other health benefits, including a reduced risk of heart condition and lower cholesterol levels. Randomized controlled trials also suggest that regular consumption of those plant foods may reduce vital sign and triglycerides.

Due to their high fiber and protein contents, legumes assist you feel full — and should thus reduce food intake and cause weight loss within the future.