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Will I Get More Out Of Fruits And Vegetables If I Eat The Skins?

Georgia Lauritzen

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A weekly question/answer column

Will I Get More Out Of Fruits And Vegetables If I Eat The Skins?

Georgia Lauritzen answers:*

The debate over skins or no skins will likely continue since most people have strong feelings about which they prefer. However, research finds that vegetable and fruit skins don't make a significant difference as far as nutrient values are concerned.

- Skins increase calories, fiber, calcium, iron, copper, magnesium, manganese, Vitamin C, Folicin and Vitamin A. When compared with the government's recommended daily amount of RDA, however, the increase is relatively minor.
- A 3-ounce potato (about the size of a deck of cards) with the skin contains 109 calories, compared to 93 without the skin. Fiber with skin is 0.66 grams compared to 0.38 without it. It also contains 1.36 grams of iron with skin compared to 0.35 grams without.
- A 3-ounce apple serving contains 59 calories compared to 57 without. The fiber is equal to 0.77 grams with the skin compared to 0.54 without. It also contains 1.36 grams of iron with the skin and 0.35 grams without.
- The most significant difference in nutrients involves the iron content in a potato and the fiber content in a pear. In a 3-ounce serving of a potato with skin, 11 percent of the RDA for iron is obtained, whereas the potato without skin provides only about 3 percent of the RDA for iron. The fiber content in a pear with skin increases about 1/2 gram.
- If you're after more fiber and iron, stick with skins. But keep in mind, if fruits or vegetables are not properly scrubbed, eating them with skins also means you're exposing yourself to pesticide residues.

* Georgia Lauritzen is Utah State University Extension Nutrition Specialist