

## **It's Wimbledon – so it has to be strawberry season!**

### **Ealing based Nutritional Therapist takes us through the benefits of eating strawberries.**

The strawberry season in the UK is between May and July, coinciding nicely with all the tennis championships. Read on to find out why you should be having your fill of these delightful fruits.

As well as being delicious strawberries have numerous health benefits:

They are an excellent source of Vitamin C which is a powerful anti-oxidant. The body uses Vitamin C to counter oxidation and free radical damage caused by external pollutants such as fumes, cigarette smoke, burnt food. At this time of year they could be important for countering the negative effects of sunburn. Being high in Vitamin C, strawberries are great for our skin and joints, as the body uses Vitamin C to make collagen – the substance that gives skin its elasticity and is vital for the mobility of joints. Vitamin C is also important for immunity and eye health.

They are also high in Vitamin K – a less well known vitamin which is vital for blood clotting and bone health.

And they are also a rich source of the mineral Manganese which is important for bone health, blood sugar balance, the functioning of the thyroid gland amongst other things.

Strawberries are rich in a number of phytonutrients (plant based nutrients) including anthocyanins and ellagitannins. It is the anthocyanins which give strawberries their luscious colour, and potent antioxidant properties. These nutrients are particularly important for heart health and have anti-inflammatory benefits and are therefore beneficial for anyone with inflammatory conditions such as arthritis, eczema and asthma.

Strawberries also promote brain health, as they protect delicate brain tissue from oxidative stress (damage caused by oxygen and the aging process) and could slow down the effects of age-related decline in brain function.

They are also great for digestion as they are high in fibre.

And the good news for those of you trying to lose weight – they are very low on the GL (glycemic load) scale, due to their low sugar and high fibre content. But always have them with a little protein - maybe some nuts or some yoghurt – to keep you fuller for longer.

Do be careful however as non-organic strawberries can have very high pesticide residues. A recent report by the EU found that nearly half of food products in Europe contain residues of pesticides, with strawberries the most likely to exceed legal limits. Strawberries are particularly susceptible to disease, and unfortunately are subjected to high pesticide exposure. To limit your exposure to pesticides always wash strawberries thoroughly and buy organic strawberries where possible.

And finally, strawberries are a known allergen. Symptoms of a strawberry allergy are swelling and tingling in the mouth, itchy eyes and runny nose. Children may develop a rash around their mouths. If you experience any of these symptoms it would be best to avoid them.

**Emily Fawell DipION is a fully qualified Nutritional Therapist who specialises in weight loss, women's health, fertility and children's health. To find out more visit her website: [www.4wellpeople.co.uk](http://www.4wellpeople.co.uk)**