

## GARLIC

Garlic is one of nature's most impressive foods, and one that has been treasured for its medicinal properties for centuries. In ancient times, Greek and Roman soldiers ate garlic before going off to war, and it was reportedly given to the slaves who built the Egyptian pyramids in order to enhance their strength and endurance.

The first thing that comes to many people's minds when thinking about garlic is, of course, the smell. That's why this herb is affectionately known as "the stinking rose." But the sulfur-containing compounds that make garlic smelly also impart many of the health benefits.

One of these compounds is allicin, and researchers have just revealed as allicin decomposes, it generates a potent antioxidant that rapidly reacts with dangerous free radicals in your body. Allicin, along with other potent antioxidants in garlic such as alliin and ajoene, combine to make garlic one superfood you may want to consider eating more of.

### **The Many Health Benefits of Garlic**

Garlic is a triple-whammy: it's antibacterial, antiviral and anti-fungal. Studies have even found it is effective at [killing antibiotic-resistance bacteria, including MRSA](#), and for reducing fungal infections, such as yeast infections, and fighting viruses and parasites.

But that's only the beginning. Garlic is great for your heart, as it helps to induce the relaxation and enlargement of blood vessels, which improves blood flow throughout the body. This can help to [prevent a potentially deadly form of high blood pressure](#), as well as heart attack and stroke.

Garlic also inhibits the formation of plaques in your arteries, and prevents cholesterol from becoming oxidized, a condition that may contribute to heart disease.

### **Garlic May Even Fight Cancer**

People who eat the most garlic and onions (a close family member to garlic) have increased [protection against at least five forms of cancer](#), according to Italian and Swiss studies, including:

- Esophageal cancer
- Colon cancer
- Breast cancer
- Ovarian cancer
- Prostate cancer

It also appears that allicin may be useful as a [cancer treatment](#). When alliinase and alliin (the two components that convert to allicin) were injected into a tumor cell, the reaction not only penetrated the cell but also killed it.

### **Garlic and Weight Loss**

Garlic is good for your heart, fights viruses and bacteria, and may even prevent cancer. Is it possible that it could also help you lose weight too? Well, an interesting study published in the [American Journal of Hypertension](#) found allicin was very good for the weight of animals fed a fructose-rich diet.

Not only did the garlic compound lower blood pressure, insulin and triglycerides, but it also helped to control weight. While the animals being fed only the fructose-rich diet gained weight, those whose diets were supplemented with allicin did not, and some even lost weight.

While I still don't recommend you use garlic to stave off the [health risks of eating too much fructose](#), it certainly lends even more credibility to this powerful herb.

### **Are Garlic Supplements as Good as Fresh Garlic?**

In many cases, eating [whole foods is a far better approach to taking a supplement](#), and in the case of garlic this is especially true.

Typically garlic must be crushed or chopped in order to stimulate the process that converts alliin into the beneficial allicin. Once the garlic is cut, the active compound in garlic loses potency rapidly and will all but disappear within about an hour of chopping.

So the best way to eat garlic is to take a whole, fresh clove, chop it, smash it or press it, wait a few minutes for the reaction to occur, and then eat it. If you use jarred, powdered, or dried garlic, you will not get all the benefits that fresh garlic has to offer.

Some of you might be wondering about the odor that may arise from eating raw garlic. As even with all the health benefits, most people don't want to walk around smelling like a clove of garlic all day.

Well, I have frequently eaten raw garlic for quite some time now, and can say from personal experience that generally a few cloves a day are tolerated by most people. If you develop a socially offensive odor, cutting back slightly on the amount you're eating should cause the odor to go away.

## **Related Links:**

- » [Garlic, Scallions Cut Risk of Prostate Cancer](#)
- » [RAW Garlic For Parasites and Viral Infections](#)
- » [Garlic Reduces Heart Disease Risk](#)