



yellow SUPER FRUIT

Story | ANGELA AMBROSE

Lemons do more than add flavor to food and drinks or a fresh scent to your cleaning products. They provide powerful antioxidants that can help you build a stronger immune system and fight off diseases.

Lemons are rich in vitamin C, citric acid, folate, potassium and fiber. For centuries, they have been used to treat scurvy, a disease caused by a deficiency of vitamin C in the diet. Lemons are known for their natural healing powers and are used today in a wide range of health and beauty products.

Registered dietician Ali Miller, owner of Naturally Nourished in Houston, encourages her clients to consume lemons to detoxify their livers, rebalance electrolytes and stave off diseases. Miller suggests starting the day with a cup of warm or room temperature

water and two tablespoons of freshly squeezed lemon juice. This stimulates the liver to produce more bile which flushes out toxins, aids in the digestion of fats, and helps reduce cholesterol.

Add a pinch of sea salt to the lemon juice and water, and you have a natural electrolyte drink, free of the additives and sweeteners found in commercial products. "It's a really nice electrolyte rebalance, especially for clients who are going through chemotherapy, or endurance athletes, whose electrolyte balance is at risk," Miller says.

Whenever possible, choose organic lemons because they offer a higher concentration of vitamin C than conventional produce, especially if you are using the zest of the lemon, the colorful outer layer of the peel—which can be

grated and added to marinades, dressings or soups.

Lemons also have an anti-microbial and anti-viral component, so adding a spritz to your hot tea not only soothes a sore throat, but can also help fight off a cold and act as a natural expectorant by loosening phlegm.

When applied topically, lemons can be used to treat acne or eczema. Miller suggests mixing a teaspoon of raw, unfiltered honey with the juice of half a lemon to create a facial scrub that can exfoliate your skin and improve your overall complexion.

During the last decade, several studies have shown lemons to have some anti-cancer compounds, but more research is needed to confirm their role in the treatment of cancer. ♣

DID YOU KNOW?

When eating greens, try pairing them with an acid such as the ascorbic acid found in lemons.

This reduces minerals into a form that is more easily absorbed and used in the body. "When lemon juice is paired with a healthy fat such as olive oil, it enhances the ability to absorb fat soluble vitamins, such as A, E and K. It also promotes the release of emulsifying bile from the liver," Miller says.

Try her Lemon Honey Dressing on your favorite greens:

Lemon Honey Dressing

INGREDIENTS

1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
2 teaspoon lemon zest
1 teaspoon raw unfiltered honey
pinch of sea salt

DIRECTIONS

Whisk ingredients and toss in salad or drizzle over vegetables.