

# Five Reasons To Eat An Apple A Day

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O’FALLON – Is there any truth to the expression, “An apple a day keeps the doctor away?”

HSHS St. Elizabeth’s Hospital is recognizing Johnny Appleseed Day, Sept. 26, by encouraging the public to check out the health benefits of simply eating an apple.

While Johnny Appleseed is a tale often told to children in school, in real life he was John Chapman, an American nurseryman who introduced apple trees to the Midwest, including Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, and was a conservationist and missionary during the earliest days of the U.S.

When apples are eaten along with a variety of other fruit and vegetables, they can help contribute to healthful eating. Nutrition experts at St. Elizabeth's share that apples contain a good amount of fiber, besides being a tasty food and easy to carry for snacking.

According to the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#), one medium-sized apple, including its skin, contains 4 grams of dietary fiber, which is 16% of the daily value of 25 grams of fiber. Additionally, the fiber found in apples is both soluble and insoluble fiber. Soluble fiber easily dissolves in water and is broken down in the body into a gel-like substance. Insoluble fiber does not dissolve in water and is left intact as food moves through the body.



All of these attributes make apples a good, healthy food choice. Eating apples can help:

- **Lower high cholesterol.** The soluble fiber found in apples can help prevent cholesterol buildup in the lining of blood vessel walls, thereby reducing the incidence of atherosclerosis (which is restricted blood flow in the arteries due to plaque buildup) and heart disease.
- **Aid digestion.** Both soluble fiber and insoluble fiber found in apples are important in digestion. Soluble fiber can help slow down digestion so that you feel full, while also slowing down the digestion of glucose, helping to control your blood sugar.

The insoluble fiber in apples (contained mostly in the apple skin) can help move food through the digestive tract to help with constipation and regularity.

- **Support a healthy immune system.** Apples are also a good source of vitamin C, known for its immune-supporting properties. Depending on the variety of the apple, a medium apple can have 8 milligrams of vitamin C, which is 8% of the daily value of 90 milligrams for adults.
- **Support weight loss.** Besides making you feel full because of the soluble fiber content, apples are a low-calorie snack option. According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), choosing a snack of under 100 calories will allow you to have one to two snacks a day according to most healthy eating plans. A medium-sized apple has about 70 calories, while a typical candy bar has 200 calories.
- **Aid in cancer prevention.** While there is no way to completely prevent cancer, a diet rich in fruit and vegetables, including apples, could help play a role in reducing the risk of certain cancers. This is due in part to their very high level of antioxidants, which have been shown in studies to limit cancer cell growth, as well as their fiber content.

While the adage that “an apple a day keeps the doctor away” may not be completely true, apples are a good healthy food choice for all ages.

For more information about HSHS St. Elizabeth’s Hospital, visit [steliz.org](http://steliz.org).