

DR. CHRISTOPHER'S
Herbal Legacy Newsletter

Beans

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From *The Green Pharmacy Guide to Healing Foods* by James A. Duke, PhD



Few foods offer the unique combination of healthy nutrients and easy accessibility that beans do. Eating more can provide a multitude of benefits.

Nutrient Nuts and Bolts: Beans get a lot of good press for being low in fat and high in protein, which makes them a great alternative to animal-based protein sources like red meat. They're also brimming with soluble fiber. This means that they are adept at whisking cholesterol out of your system

via the intestines, making them good for your heart.

A lesser-known benefit of beans, though, is their high levels of isoflavones, compounds that are similar in structure to the estrogen produced by your body (which is why they are also called phytoestrogens). These isoflavones may ease the symptoms of menopause, prevent some forms of cancer, reduce your risk of heart disease, and improve your bone and prostate health, among other benefits.

How to Get More: The nice thing about beans is how easily you can add them to any meal. Pour them into soups and salads or use them in spicy Mexican dishes. You also can't go wrong with hummus, a mix of chickpeas, lemon juice, and garlic often served with pita bread or crackers. Or try substituting tofu for meat in some of your main dishes.

Making the Most of Them: Dried beans may give you a slight nutritional edge, but not that much, so if you don't have time to soak and prepare beans, don't worry. You can still gain a great benefit from canned beans. They're often high in sodium, though, so you may want to drain and rinse them before using.

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