

Pink Powerhouse: The Health Benefits of Dragon Fruit

(*Leena Preeti Lakra, Aakriti Singh Sisodiya, Er. Yashwant Kumar Patel, Dr. Soumitra Tiwari, Nikki Agrawal and Meesala Sudhakar)

Atal Bihari Vajpayee Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh

*Corresponding Author's email: leenapreeti01@gmail.com

Dragon fruit grows on the *Hylocereus cactus*, also known as the Honolulu queen, whose flowers only open at night. The plant is native to southern Mexico and Central America. Today, it is grown all over the world. It goes by many names, including pitaya, pitahaya, and strawberry pear. Dragon fruits are consumed as a fresh fruits or can be used in jams, ice cream, jelly production, fruits juice and wine. This fruits also used in face packs. The two most common types have bright red skin with green scales that resemble a dragon hence the name. The most widely available variety has white pulp with black seeds, though a less common type with red pulp and a black seed exists as well. Another variety referred to as yellow dragon fruit has yellow skin and white pulp with black seeds. Dragon fruit may look exotic, but its flavours are similar to other fruits. Its taste has been described as a slightly sweet cross between a kiwi and a pear.



Major Types of Dragon Fruit

There are 3 types dragon fruits based on their colour:

- Red colour fruits with white colour flesh
- Red colour fruits with red colour flesh
- Yellow colour fruits with white colour flesh



Fig. -Major Types of Dragon Fruit

Provides Several Antioxidants

Dragon fruit contains several types of **antioxidants**. These are compounds that protect your cells from unstable molecules called free radicals, which are linked to chronic diseases and aging. These are some of the main antioxidants contained in dragon fruit pulp

- **Betalains:** Found in the pulp of red dragon fruit, these deep red pigments have been shown to protect “bad” LDL cholesterol from becoming oxidized or damaged.
- **Hydroxycinnamates:** This group of compounds has demonstrated anticancer activity in test-tube and animal studies.

- **Flavonoids:** This large, diverse group of antioxidants is linked to better brain health and a reduced risk of heart disease.

Potential Health Benefits

- Dietary fibers are non-digestible carbohydrates that boast an extensive list of potential health benefits. The dragon fruit may provide various health benefits.
- **May Help Fight Chronic Disease:** diets high in antioxidants may help prevent chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes and arthritis.
- **Loaded With Fiber:** Dietary fibers are non-digestible carbohydrates that boast an extensive list of potential health benefits.
- **Promotes a Healthy Gut:** dragon fruit contains prebiotics; it can potentially improve the balance of good bacteria in your gut: Prebiotics are a specific type of fiber that promotes the growth of healthy bacteria in your gut.
- Dragon fruit is one of the few fresh fruits that contain iron.
- Good Source of Magnesium
- A Dragon fruit helps in preventing asthma.
- A dragon fruits helps in weight management.
- This fruits is a good source of antioxidants.
- This fruits is high in fats and protein.
- A Dragon fruit helps in controlling diabetes.