

## Avocados

Avocados are a very nutritious food (they're a fruit actually). It's true they're high in fat – 84 per cent of the calories (325) in an avocado come from fat (30 grams). But as you read, avocados contain mainly “good” fat called monounsaturated fat (the same type of fat found in olive oil). In fact, two-thirds of the fat in an avocado comes from monounsaturated fat.

A diet high in monounsaturated fat from avocados has been shown to lower LDL (bad) cholesterol and raise HDL (good) cholesterol. Monounsaturated fat can also help reduce inflammation in the body.

There are other reasons why avocados are good for you. They're packed with potassium and deliver lutein and zeaxanthin, two phytochemicals that guard against cataract and macular degeneration. Avocados are an excellent source of folate, a B vitamin that keeps the DNA of your cells in good repair. Half of an avocado provides one-quarter of a day's worth of folate (the recommended daily intake is 400 micrograms). And they also supply a little vitamin E to your diet.

Avocados are also an exceptional source of fibre, which can cause digestive problems for some people. One avocado has 13.5 grams of fibre – half a day's worth for women (and one-third of a day's worth for men)! But everyone tolerates foods differently. While some people feel gassy and bloated after eating an avocado, others don't experience digestive upset.

You shouldn't have to eliminate avocados from your diet to solve your gas problem. Reduce your portion size from one whole avocado to one quarter or one-half to see if that helps. Here are a few suggestions to enjoy smaller portions of avocado and still benefit from their nutrition.

Spread whole grain toast with ripe avocado instead of butter or margarine. Add black pepper to taste.

Add chopped avocado to black bean soup or tacos for garnish.

Mix diced avocado with chopped red onion, tomatoes, cilantro and fresh lime juice to make a salsa to serve with grilled fish or chicken.

Add slices of avocado to a sandwich instead of cheese.

Combine sliced avocado, sliced fennel, orange segments and fresh mint for a refreshing salad. Top with fresh chopped parsley and drizzle with extra virgin olive oil.

*Leslie Beck, a registered dietitian, is the national director of nutrition at BodyScience Medical. She can be seen every Thursday at noon on CTV News Channel's Direct ([www.lesliebeck.com](http://www.lesliebeck.com)).*