

# Carroll County Times

## Strawberries a versatile, healthful fruit

By Terry Serio, Food for Life

Fruits and vegetables have many healthful vitamins and minerals. They are a major source of fiber, which we all need to aid in digestion. Strawberries are nutritious, delicious and a great value when they are in season during the spring and summer. They are so versatile that they can be added to side dishes and desserts to add a sweet, yet nourishing touch. They are wholesome and flavorful and can be served on top of cereal, pancakes, french toast, ice cream and yogurt just to name a few suggestions.

In addition to being low in fat and calories, strawberries are naturally high in fiber, vitamin C, foliate, potassium and antioxidants, making them a sweet alternative that advances heart health, reduces the risk of certain types of cancer, lowers systolic blood pressure (associated with heart disease) and gives a boost to total body wellness. In addition to advancing heart health and reducing risks of certain types of cancer, strawberries have been shown previously to enhance memory function and aid in the management of rheumatoid arthritis.

The Romans prized wild strawberries for their medicinal properties. Ounce for ounce, strawberries have more vitamin C than citrus fruit. Eight strawberries will provide 140 percent of the recommended daily intake of vitamin C for kids. One cup of strawberries is only 55 calories.

A nutrient-dense fruit, strawberries also have the added benefit of great taste while being high in fiber. Their versatility and adaptability add interest, lively color and flavor to either indulgent or healthy recipes. Fresh, frozen or dried, eaten alone or tossed into cereal, salads or yogurt, strawberries naturally add a nutritional edge to an ordinary meal or snack.

Strawberries are available year-round, offering the perfect opportunity for consumers to add great taste and nutrition to their everyday, healthy diet. While research shows that 94 percent of Americans currently consume strawberries annually, this recent research strongly suggests that consuming them more often will be beneficial to their overall long-term health.

The following recipe and other nutrition resources can be accessed at the University of Maryland nutrition Web site at [www.eatsmart.umd.edu](http://www.eatsmart.umd.edu).

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### Berry bread pudding

- 1 1/2 cups berries (frozen blueberries, sliced strawberries, or raspberries) - thawed
- 4-5 slices whole wheat bread - crusts removed
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar (optional)
- Yogurt, low fat vanilla (optional)

Instructions:

1. Combine the thawed berries and sugar (if you choose to use the sugar). Layer a spoonful of berries on the bottom of a small 2 cup deep dish. Cover the berries and the bottom of the dish with a layer of bread. Spoon in most of the berries. Add another layer of bread and continue until the dish is full, finish off with a layer of bread.
2. Cover the dish with plastic wrap and place a plate or bowl over the top of the berry dish that fits just inside of it. Place a heavy object on top to press down on the fruit and bread layers. Refrigerate overnight. (Check the dish to be sure juice does not run over the top. You may need to replace the heavy object with a lighter one to prevent spills.)
3. Serve with a dollop of vanilla yogurt or a sprinkle of powdered sugar.

Serving Size: 1 cup; Yield: 2 servings