

# Health of Sweetpotatoes

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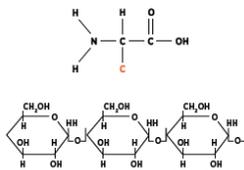
A sweetpotato is considered a storage root, which grows underground. When someone eats a sweetpotato, they are actually eating the storage root of the plant. Sweetpotatoes are a good source of vitamins and minerals for us to consume, and is also calorie friendly, too. Some would say sweetpotatoes are a super food. Let's find out how healthy they really are.



*A sweetpotato baked in skin, without salt or added sugar has many nutritional benefits.*

## Complex Carbohydrates

Sweetpotatoes are made up of complex carbs – long chains of sugar molecules (polysaccharides). When eaten, carbohydrates break down into glucose (sugar) – the body's main energy source.



**CARBS &  
PROTEIN**



**BUILD  
MUSCLE**

We use carbohydrates to build energy, but it is important to eat good carbohydrates that are healthy for us. I guess you could say the sugars that are obtained through eating a honey bun are certainly not a good choice for a healthy diet, whereas the sugars broken down by our bodies when we eat a sweetpotato is very healthy. As we eat carbohydrates they go into our bodies, which breakdown the food and use the proteins and nutrients we need to survive. Eating a balanced diet with complex carbohydrates is vital to living a healthy life.

## Vitamins and Minerals

Vitamins and minerals are considered essential nutrients to our bodily functions. Actually, vitamins and minerals alone perform hundreds of roles in our bodies. Did you ever wonder what happens when you get a cut and it begins to heal? The healing process is helped by the essential nutrients in your body. Vitamins and minerals also boost your immune system, which helps protect you from getting sick. It is important we take in the recommended daily amount of our vitamins and minerals.



## Vitamin C

Vitamin C is an antioxidant that plays an important role in protecting cell membranes from oxidative damage. Like citrus, sweetpotatoes are a good source of vitamin C, which helps fight infections, heal wounds and absorb iron. A medium sweetpotato provides 35 percent of your daily recommended amount of vitamin C. It is important to get vitamin C from food, as opposed to supplements. This is because too much vitamin C from supplements can actually shortcut the muscle repair process.

## Vitamin A

When eaten with the skin on, a medium sweetpotato has over four times the recommended daily intake of vitamin A – which plays a vital role in vision, bone development and immune function. Vitamin A is a fat-soluble vitamin, so be sure to eat your sweetpotato with a little bit of fat, like sour cream, for maximum vitamin A absorption.

Vitamin A also acts as an antioxidant, which has been shown to have a protective effect on cells. This is especially important for athletes because exercise produces free radicals. Excess free radicals can damage cells.

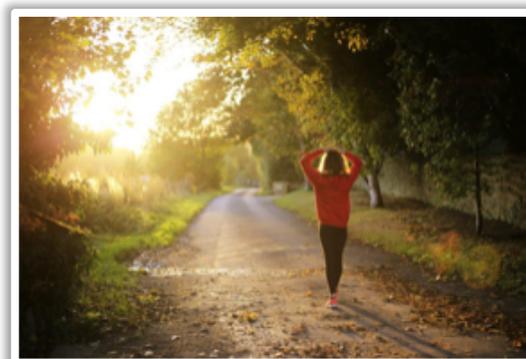
Whatever fitness path you choose – triathlons or simply enjoying the outdoors on a walk – sweetpotatoes should be an integral part of your health and fitness journey.

**References:** NC Sweetpotato Commission (2018). Retrieved from <https://ncsweetpotatoes.com/usda-sweet-potato-nutritional-analysis/benefits-of-sweet-potato/>

For more information on sweetpotatoes visit [ncsweetpotatoes.com](https://ncsweetpotatoes.com)

## IRON

Endurance athletes – particularly females and adolescents – may be at risk for reduced iron stores due to the increased iron demands during training. Sweetpotatoes contain iron, thus helping to counteract iron depletion.



## Other Benefits of Sweetpotatoes:

**FIBER** Sweetpotatoes are a good source of fiber, which can contribute to feelings of satiety, or feeling “full” and can aid in digestion, by helping to help keep you regular. Diets rich in foods containing fiber, such as some vegetables and fruits, may reduce the risk of heart disease, and some types of cancer (a disease associated with many factors). A medium sweetpotato baked in its skin has 4 grams of fiber, more than a packet of instant oatmeal.

**POTASSIUM** Sweetpotatoes contain potassium. Diets containing foods that are a good source of potassium and that are low in sodium may reduce the risk of high blood pressure and stroke.

**CARBOHYDRATES** Sweetpotatoes are made of complex carbohydrates that are released at a steady pace for a constant source of energy, so no sugar highs or lows to worry about.

**CALORIES** A medium sweetpotato (approximately 2 inches in diameter and 5 inches in length) contains about 100 calories when baked in the skin.