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Media release

Bananas with B6 for pregnancy health & fight cancer

Scientists have proven that the vitamin B6, found in Australian bananas, can reduce the risks of colon cancer, as well as decrease the number of unsuccessful pregnancies.

Australian bananas are a valuable source of Vitamin B6, which experts agree is important to have on a daily basis because the body cannot store this vitamin.

According to Accredited Practising Dietitian, Glenn Cardwell, getting enough B6 has been recently linked to a reduced risk of colon cancer, the third most deadly cancer, killing about 8 Australians every day.

“A Scottish study of nearly 5000 people found that eating plenty of B6 reduced the chance of getting colon cancer by about 20%. Bananas were one of the main sources of B6 in the diet”.

Cardwell says that the banana is the best fruit source of vitamin B6, with one small banana providing more than a quarter of our daily needs.

“Getting enough B6 may have its benefits for expectant mums too. According to a 2007 study on 364 young women, those that had adequate vitamin B6 had more chance of conceiving and less chance of losing their baby early in pregnancy. Having sufficient levels of B6 improved the odds of conception by 40% and lowered the odds of early pregnancy loss by 30%, compared to women with low levels of B6”.

Cardwell says, “Other reports suggest that B6 or *pyridoxine* is a part of over 100 enzyme systems and assists the immune system and the growth of new cells. It is also used in the processing and metabolism of proteins, fats and carbohydrates, while assisting with controlling mood swings as well as behaviour.

“B6 helps with the production of neurotransmitters in the brain and amino acids that are made into body proteins. B6 is also essential for the production of haemoglobin, the protein that transports oxygen to every body cell”.

“Insufficient B6 has been linked to a greater risk of cancer and the increased formation of *homocysteine*, high levels of which can cause heart disease.

“As we get older, our need for vitamin B6 increases. Australian government tables show we need about 20% more B6 after we turn 50”. The banana is the perfect soft fruit for anyone who has difficulty chewing as well.

As this vitamin is readily lost in the urine, it must be taken regularly to ensure an adequate intake. Anybody on a very high protein diet or drinking alcohol will need more B6 in their diet.

“With quality bananas plentiful at the moment and extremely good value, they are a great healthy energy snack and naturally high in vitamin B6,” Cardwell says.

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