



Watermelons contain more than 90% water, and are a good source of Vitamin A and C. Watermelons also contain high levels of lycopene, which is found only in a small select group of fruits and vegetables. The 'redder' the melon the more lycopene the watermelon contains.

Watermelons have a low glycaemic load,⁴ - though their glycaemic index value is 72. As there is very little carbohydrate in a serving of watermelon, its glycaemic load is low¹.

HEALTH BENEFITS

Carotenoids

Carotenoids are yellow, orange, and red pigments in plants. Of these, *beta-cryptoxanthin*, and *lycopene* are found in watermelons.

Lycopene

International studies have found that people who eat high lycopene diets had a much lower risk of developing certain cancers, especially prostate cancer among men².

Studies also correlate high intake of lycopene-containing foods with reduced incidence of cardiovascular disease³.

One medium wedge (1/16 of a melon that is 38cm long x 19cm diameter) of watermelon contains 13mg of lycopene

Beta-Cryptoxanthin

Beta-cryptoxanthin is a provitamin A carotenoid, which can be converted by the body to retinol (vitamin A).

The results of *studies* suggest that diets high in carotenoid-rich fruits and vegetables are associated with reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and some cancers³.

One medium wedge (1/16 of a melon that is 38cm long x 19cm diameter) of watermelon contains 0.2mg of *Beta-Cryptoxanthin*

Vitamin C

Vitamin C is required for the synthesis of collagen and the neurotransmitter, norepinephrine. Neurotransmitters are critical to brain function. In addition, vitamin C is required for the transport of fat into cellular mitochondria, where the fat is converted to energy. Research also suggests that vitamin C is involved in the metabolism of cholesterol to bile acids, which may have implications for blood cholesterol levels and the incidence of gallstones⁴.

Nutrient Profile - Watermelon

Nutrient Proximates	Value per 100g
Energy, including dietary fibre	120kJ
Moisture	90.7g
Protein	0.6g
Nitrogen	0.1g
Fat	0.1g
Ash	0.8g
Dietary fibre	1.2g
Fructose	2.7g

Vitamin C is a highly effective antioxidant. Even in small amounts vitamin C can protect indispensable molecules in the body from damage by free radicals.

Coronary Heart Disease

A recent analysis of cohort studies concluded that *dietary* vitamin C was inversely related to coronary heart disease risk⁴.

Stroke

With respect to vitamin C, a 20-year Japanese study found that the risk of stroke in those with the highest serum levels of vitamin C was 29 per cent lower than in those with the lowest serum levels of vitamin C⁴.

Cancer

A number of studies have shown that increased consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables is associated with a reduced risk for most types of cancer. A number of case-control studies have investigated the role of vitamin C in cancer prevention⁴.

Gout

Is characterized by abnormally high blood levels of uric acid. Urate crystals may form in joints and kidneys. Dietary and lifestyle modification may be helpful in both the prevention and treatment of gout. A 20-year study found that total daily vitamin C intake was inversely associated with risk of gout⁴.

Seasonality

Watermelons are grown throughout Australia, and due to the wide climate range, delicious Australian Melons are available all year.

Selection

Ripe watermelons when tapped with a finger have a sharp ring. Whole, uncut good quality

Nutrient Proximates	Value per 100g
Glucose	1.6g
Sucrose	1.4g
Maltose	0g
Lactose	0g
Total sugars	5.7g
Starch	0g
Available carbohydrate, without sugar alcohols	5.7g
Available carbohydrate, with sugar alcohols	5.7g



watermelons are firm and free of blemishes. If the part of the melon that was sitting on the ground is distinctly white or yellow then the watermelon was picked when ripe.

Storage

Cut watermelons have a solid flesh with a uniform crimson-red colour. Occasionally tiny white or black seeds may be present in seedless watermelons and in winter the flesh may be paler than in summer.

Uncut watermelons should be washed under running water as soon as they are brought home, and refrigerated as soon as they are cut.

Cut watermelons will keep 3 to 4 days, or longer when refrigerated. Cut surfaces of fruit are best covered to prevent them drying out or deteriorating.

Links

Australian Melon Association:
<http://www.melonsaustralia.org.au/home>

References

- <http://www.glycemicindex.com/>
- <http://www.cancer.org/treatment/treatmentsandsideeffects/complementaryandalternativemedicine/dietandnutrition/lycopene>
- <http://lpi.oregonstate.edu/infocenter/phytochemicals/carotenoids/>
- <http://lpi.oregonstate.edu/infocenter/vitamins/vitaminC/>