

## ***Add dry to diet. When fresh fruit is lacking, turn to dehydrated***

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Gone are the juicy nectarines and plums of summer. Produce sections are woefully sparse on fruits this time of year, leaving your diet relegated to apples, oranges and pears. Tasty, but how about some variety? Dried fruits — the dehydrated counterparts to summer's onslaught of fresh fruits — pack a nutritional punch, sometimes with more goodies than even the originals.

### Need-to-know nutrients

Dried fruits shouldn't take the place of fresh fruits and vegetables in your diet, but they can be a helpful way to get the two daily recommended servings of fruit when fresh isn't available.

### THE GOOD

- **Nutrient-packed:** Like all fruits, the dried varieties are packed with important vitamins, especially A and C, as well as potassium and folate.

- **Fiber-enhanced:** Most dried fruits have more fiber than the fresh varieties. Dried plums (prunes) have triple the amount. Additionally, the dried fruits tend to be low in fat and carbohydrates.

- **Antioxidant-loaded:** Dried cherries, cranberries, apricots, plums and blueberries are all high in the important chemicals that help to slow down the natural process that leads to cell and tissue damage. Dried blueberries, for example, have four times the antioxidants of fresh blueberries.

- **Extended shelf life:** Most varieties do not need to be refrigerated and will last up to six months in an airtight container.

### THE BAD

- **More calories, sugar:** When fresh fruits are dried, the process eliminates the moisture from the product, making it more dense. This increases the proportion of calories and sugar.

- **Degraded nutrients:** The dehydration process sometimes decreases the amount of vitamins A and C compared to fresh varieties.

- **Added sugar:** Avoid brands that add sugar to help combat the sometimes tart taste. Check the ingredients list and avoid brands that have sugar listed as one of the top ingredients.

**SERVING SIZE** cup of dried fruit is equivalent to a 1 cup serving of fresh fruit or one average-sized piece of fresh fruit.

### ALLERGY NOTE

Dried fruits, such as apples and apricots, which darken when exposed to air, are sometimes treated with sulfites to keep them from discoloring. Sulfites may cause an allergic reaction in some people. Check the ingredients list.