

Real Foods that Heal  
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### **Cantaloupe: works hard, tastes great!**

August at my home in the southeast brings a full palate of summer sensations. The heat and humidity can feel like a sauna when you step outside, thunderstorms may bring a few moments of welcome relief, and the night air is full of the sounds of crickets, katydids, and frogs, while bats flutter overhead scooping up mosquitoes and moths. The late summer is also the peak season for enjoying ripe melons here, and the cantaloupe (or muskmelon) is one of the best reasons to celebrate summer!

The cantaloupe is a perfect addition to anyone's daily diet. With less than 60 calories per cup, and a low glycemic index, this delicious cool summer treat will not unduly raise blood sugar, and can be compatible with weight control efforts. It is a good source of dietary fiber, which can help control cholesterol levels. It is also an excellent source of potassium, and diets high in natural sources of potassium are associated with lowered risks of high blood pressure and heart disease. The cantaloupe also provides almost 70 mg vitamin C per cup, adding this excellent antioxidant which is also important for maintaining healthy connective tissue in the body. And as you might expect because of the orange color of the ripe melon, that cup of cantaloupe provides over 5000 IU of vitamin A as natural mixed carotenoids, powerful antioxidants which serve to neutralize free radicals (sometimes called reactive oxygen species) in the body. Free radicals are thought to be one of the factors that can initiate cancer growth. We increase the presence of free radicals in the body when exposed to environmental toxins, but they are also a natural waste product of the metabolism of all of our cells. It is clear that simply the process of being alive and breathing air creates a requirement for antioxidants to protect our cells against oxidative damage to cells and DNA.

The good news is that we now have research showing that consuming cantaloupe and other foods high in carotenoids can decrease risk not only of cancers and heart disease, but also cataracts and macular degeneration, the leading cause of blindness among older Americans.

So, in the heat of summer, your body will thank you for this cool treat, whose combination of antioxidants, low glycemic index, low calorie, and high fiber can work to prevent cancer, heart disease, and other diseases of aging. But while the cantaloupe is working, all you have to do is enjoy it!

#### **Cantaloupe fruit salad**

Your own creative imagination can be the guide to modifying or improving on this serving suggestion, based on your own taste and the availability of fresh local produce. Cut a cantaloupe into cubes and place in a large serving bowl. Add cubes of kiwi (not thin slices, as the kiwi will become mushy and unappetizing),

red seedless grapes (look for organically grown grapes, as conventionally grown grapes are one of the highest fruits for pesticide residues), and a few cubes of watermelon as well. Sprinkle some finely chopped crystallized ginger over the top. Serve with a little plain yogurt over the top if you like.

Who needs a sugary dessert when you can have something this good?

To your health,

Robert Pendergrast, M.D.

[www.realfoodsthatheal.com](http://www.realfoodsthatheal.com)

P.S. You know 5 people who deserve to know how to reduce their disease risk by food choices. Please forward this e-mail to them by using the link below.

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