

Improve Liver Health With the Benefits Of Artichokes

Artichokes have been used for thousands of years by Mediterranean civilizations, including the Romans, Greeks and Egyptians. Most of the artichokes consumed in the United States are grown in California.

Used both ceremonially and medicinally, there are many benefits of artichokes due to their high levels of folic acid, vitamin C, potassium, iron, copper and vitamin B.

Part of the thistle family – *Cyanarascolymus* – the artichoke is the immature flower of the plant. The leaves and stem, though not as popular as the heart, are also edible and contain substantial nutritional value.

Top 3 Reasons to Add Artichokes to Your Nutrition Plan

Boost Liver Function & Digestion

High in silymarin and cynarin, your liver loves artichokes – even the extract made from the artichoke is extremely beneficial to proper liver function. Some studies have shown that these compounds may speed liver cell regeneration.

As a natural diuretic and choleric, artichokes stimulate bile production, improve gallbladder function and aid in a more efficient breakdown of foods for overall improved digestion.

One of the major benefits of artichokes to your liver is that they are a natural defense against hepatotoxicity [toxicity of the liver]. They guard your liver cells from damage caused by [outside pollutants, carcinogens and toxins](#).

The most common cause of acute liver failure – accounting for almost 50% of hospital visits every year – is from “staggered overdose” of acetaminophen [Tylenol]. Liver damage also results from alcohol abuse, pharmaceutical drug interactions, cleaning products and some herbal remedies not approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Antioxidant Power of Artichokes Can Reduce Cholesterol

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) **artichokes contain more disease-fighting antioxidants than any other vegetable**.

In a review of the 100 most antioxidant-rich foods from all food groups, artichokes came in at number seven! Along with the liver helpers silymarin and cynarin, artichokes also contain quercetin, rutin and anthocyanins.

One of the interesting ways artichokes help reduce cholesterol is with the compounds cynarin and sesquiterpenen-lactones. Studies show that these two compounds increase bile excretion and improve how your body uses cholesterol. The result is lower LDL “bad” cholesterol and higher HDL “good” cholesterol.

Artichokes were also rated nine times more beneficial than vitamin C alone by the Oxygen Radical Absorbance Capacity (ORAC) system.

They have an amazing ability to fight oxidation caused by free radicals. Countless studies have connected oxidative stress to the development of many serious diseases – including heart disease, cancer and neuro-



degenerative disease.

The fiber content alone of a medium artichoke is more than that of a full cup of prunes – the most commonly known way to get your recommended fiber intake.



Abundant Vitamins & Minerals in Artichokes

- [Folate](#)
- Vitamins C and K
- Manganese
- Copper
- Phosphorus

Artichokes Are Cancer Fighters Too

According to a study done in Italy, a diet rich in the antioxidants found in artichokes lowers your breast cancer risk. They also cause apoptosis [spontaneous cell death] in cancer cells and inhibit the growth of abnormal cells.

So far, scientists have discovered natural cancer-fighting benefits of artichokes in treating and preventing prostate cancer, breast cancer and leukemia.

One promising study in Germany reported results that artichoke extract stopped [leukemia cancer cells](#) from multiplying, killed off existing cancer cells and removed cancer agents that were stimulating the development of the disease.

When Not to Eat Artichokes

If you've already been diagnosed with liver, kidney or gallbladder disease, talk to your health care provider before adding artichokes to your diet.

Since they stimulate bile production, they could complicate your present condition. Also, studies have not been conducted with pregnant women or small children so safety is unknown.

An Alternative Way to Prepare Artichokes: Roast Them

- 1) Cut off the top third of the artichoke.
- 2) Cut off the stem. Rub the top and the stem with lemon to prevent discoloration.
- 3) Tear a large rectangle of aluminum foil, place the artichoke on it stem down.
- 4) Add two peeled cloves of garlic. Drizzle extra virgin olive oil over the artichoke as well as a squeeze of lemon juice.
- 5) Wrap the foil around the artichoke tightly. You may want to double wrap it.
- 6) Place in a pan and roast in a preheated oven at 425 for one hour and 15 minutes. Smaller artichokes may only take one hour, while jumbo sizes may take an hour and half.
- 7) Let sit for 30 minutes before unwrapping.

8) Peel off the leaves and enjoy! Don't forget to remove the choke (fur) and enjoy the artichoke heart.

Look for delicious and nutritious artichokes at your local store today!

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Underground Health Reporter Recommendations

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