



How did November sneak up on us? This fall seems to be speeding by very quickly! Very soon we will have the holidays upon us! One of the fall seasonal fruits to enjoy is the pear. There are many varieties and you should sample them all! Pears are one of the ancient fruits, with a history that pre-dates Christianity by 2,000 years. Some of the earliest writings place pears origin in China, and there are records of pear orchards in Greece in Homer's time. Homer aptly referred to them as a "Gift from the Gods". Pears arrived in the United States with European settlers in the 1700's. Today, most pears grown in the United States are grown in the Pacific Northwest. They are picked firm and improve in both texture and flavor as they ripen at room temperature. Once they are ripe, they can be refrigerated.

Nutritionally speaking, pears are a winner! The average size pear is about 100 calories and packed with fiber. With its skin a pear provides about 5 grams of dietary fiber which is a big contribution toward the recommended daily fiber intake of 25-30 grams for adults. Almost half of this fiber (41%) is in the form of pectin, a soluble fiber. Soluble fiber helps in lowering cholesterol levels and the risk for Type 2 diabetes as well as with bowel regularity. A recent study at Tufts University linked fiber to preventing weight gain in women. This is believed to be because fiber is bulky and helps to create a sense of fullness. Pears are a good source of vitamins C and E. Vitamin C gives a boost to your immune system and promotes healing. In a recent study published in the Journal of the American College of Nutrition, vitamin C was shown to reduce levels of C-reactive protein, a marker of inflammation and chronic disease risk in humans. Pears have 30% more potassium than an apple. Potassium is needed for maintaining heartbeat, muscle contraction, nerve transmission, blood pressure control and other body functions. Pears also contain phytochemicals (flavonoids) and have a high content of antioxidants to help fight against aging and chronic diseases.

Pears make a wonderful snack but there are other ways to add them to your eating:

*For breakfast:* Slice ripe juicy pears into warm oatmeal, or puree with yogurt into a pear smoothie.

*For a snack:* Slice them and place on top of a toasted bagel with light cream cheese or peanut butter.

*For lunch:* A quick twist on a classic, add pears to a mixed greens salad with feta or blue cheese and walnuts.

*For dessert:* Bake or poach or grill pears as you would apples, with a sprinkle of cinnamon sugar and a drizzle maple syrup or dark chocolate for a sweet, satisfying low calorie treat. (see the recipes attached).

### **Got leaves?**

If you are looking for a way to include more activity in your life and your yard is full of leaves, you can "kill 2 birds with one stone" as the saying goes. Raking leaves is considered a moderate activity and you burn about 150 calories for each 30 minutes. When you venture into the yard to rake, remember to pace yourself and be careful of your back. Raking is a vigorous activity that

leaves many people with sore backs because it requires the use of muscles you don't typically use. Be sure to avoid back injury by moving your feet instead of standing in one spot and constantly bending and straightening. Be sure not to twist the trunk of your body as you rake. A proper raking procedure is to rake leaves straight back and move with the rake as you walk backwards. Take frequent breaks while you work, and give your back a good stretch by leaning backwards to reduce pain. Also switch hand positions periodically to reduce the amount of stress on one arm and side of the body.

Please be sure and check out the wellness newsletter prepared by ISU Health and Human Performance students attached above!

Please remember I am here as your nutrition resource and would be pleased to meet to discuss any nutrition concerns you may have!

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