Health Benefits of Growing Your Own Vegetables

Eating more vegetables certainly adds to good health and nutrition, but growing your own vegetables has even more health benefits. You’ll not only have the freshest vegetables right in your own backyard, you’ll have the opportunity to engage in physical activity outdoors while you tend your garden.

With more fresh vegetables at home, you’ll be likely to increase the number of servings of vegetables you eat per day. The USDA and National Institute of Health guidelines recommend at least five servings of fruits and vegetables per day.

Vegetables are rich in nutrients like vitamin A, vitamin C, folate, iron, and potassium. They also contain flavonoids, which act as antioxidants that fight disease and help build our immune systems. By growing even a small variety of vegetables in your garden, you can boost your vitamin and mineral intake significantly.

Vegetables are naturally low in calories. The fiber and water in vegetables make them filling, so if you substitute vegetables for foods higher in calories and fat, you have the potential to lose weight.

Studies have shown that vegetables are effective in reducing your risk of many different diseases. According to a report by Iowa State University, five studies reported that a high intake of vegetables and fruits can reduce the risk of stroke by up to 25 percent. Eating more vegetables can also reduce the risk of high blood pressure, certain cancers, cataracts, birth defects and diabetes.

When you grow your own vegetables, you have control over chemicals like pesticides and herbicides that are used. You can limit your exposure to these potentially harmful chemicals by growing your own vegetables naturally.

Yes, you will eat a healthier diet if you have your own garden, but what about some of the other health benefits? Gardening is a fantastic outdoor activity. Your garden will need regular tending, and each session you spend in the garden can be turned into a healthy workout.

You can combine lifting, bending, and stretching to work most of the major muscle groups while you garden. Alternate strenuous movements like vigorous digging and raking with less strenuous planting or weeding movements as you work in the garden. Switch using your left and right sides in various movements to challenge and balance your muscles.
Being outdoors exposes us to fresh air and sunlight, which helps produce the recommended amount of vitamin D. Vitamin D helps with the absorption of calcium, which is essential to forming and maintaining strong bones and teeth, as well as fighting osteoporosis.

Many people find that gardening is a rewarding and relaxing activity that can help reduce stress. So not only will gardening provide a physical workout, but it can improve your mood as well.

When you stop to think about it, the benefits of growing your own vegetables are pretty amazing. Not only can you benefit from eating a healthier diet, losing weight and fighting disease, but you’ll have a creative new way to exercise and a healthier mental outlook on life.