

## THE TRUTH ABOUT AVOCADOS

Avocados are often given a bad name because of their high fat content, but the good news is that avocado may be as good for you as it tastes. Let's explore some of the benefits of this wonderful fruit - they are:

- high in **monounsaturated fats**
- higher in **fibre** than many other fruits
- a rich source of **vitamin E**
- an excellent source of **potassium**
- a good source of **vitamins B<sub>6</sub>, C and folate**

Avocados certainly have a higher fat content than most fruit, but this fat is predominantly monounsaturated fat, which helps lower LDL (bad) cholesterol levels. The fibre helps control your cholesterol and blood sugar levels as well as keeps you fuller for longer. Vitamins E and C are valuable antioxidants that help prevent the damaging effects of free radicals. They protect the artery walls from being damaged and prevent a build-up of fatty plaque. Potassium can assist with keeping blood pressure down and helps maintain a regular heartbeat. Vitamin B<sub>6</sub> is important for the normal functioning of the nervous system.

Although avocado has a high fat content, it can still be included as part of a healthy diet - even for those on an energy-restricted diet. In moderation, it will not compromise weight loss - in fact it will affect lipid profiles positively. What does this mean for you? How much can you eat? A quarter of a small avocado (30g) is equivalent to a fat serving (e.g. a teaspoon of oil or margarine). So, substitute your usual scraping of margarine with a delicious serving of avocado!

### **A few more tips for including avocado in your diet:**

- use it as an excellent substitute for meats in sandwiches and salads
- spread it on toast - serve with lemon juice, salt and pepper.
- use it as a filling for sushi (e.g. California rolls)
- slice it into salads
- make a dip or guacamole (refer to our avocado dip recipe below)

For more information on general heart health contact the Heart Mark Diet Line on 0860 223 222, email [heart@heartfoundation.co.za](mailto:heart@heartfoundation.co.za) or visit [www.heartfoundation.co.za](http://www.heartfoundation.co.za).

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### **Recipe for Avocado Dip**

(serves 10)

#### **Ingredients**

2 Avocados mashed  
1 Tablespoon lemon juice  
1 Tomato chopped finely  
Half a small onion chopped finely  
2 Tablespoons plain fat free yoghurt  
Quarter teaspoon crushed garlic (optional)  
Few drops of Tabasco sauce  
Pinch coarsely ground black pepper

#### **Method**

Cut avocados in half, remove pips and skin. Mash the avocados with a potato masher. Combine the mashed avocado with the lemon juice and remaining ingredients. (If the tomatoes are quite juicy, drain excess juice away after chopping and reduce the amount of yoghurt). Serve at once or store in the fridge until needed.

**Nutritional breakdown per serving**

Energy	193 kJ
Total Fat	3.7 g
Saturated Fat	0.6 g
Polyunsaturated Fat	0.5 g
Monounsaturated Fat	2.3 g
Cholesterol	0 mg
Fibre	0.8 g
Sodium	6.8 mg