



# EATING 101

## RU DINING HEALTHY?

A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE RU HEALTHY DINING TEAM

A Joint Program Between Rutgers Dining Services and The New Jersey Institute for Food, Nutrition, and Health

### Tomayto, Tomahto

Whichever way you choose to pronounce it, we can all agree that tomatoes are nutritious and delicious. Can you believe that this plant from the nightshade family was once avoided, due to the widespread belief that it was poisonous? Though a tomato is botanically a berry, it is popularly recognized as a vegetable. No matter how you *slice* it, a single cup of tomatoes contains only 30 calories and is a good source of Vitamins C and K and minerals copper, potassium and manganese. Common tomato varieties include grape, cherry, heirloom and beefsteak. Their carotenoid (antioxidant) content is based on color and ripeness. Read below to see how this superfood enhances health from head to toe(mato).

#### HEART HEALTH

These red beauties are heart healthy. Tomato consumption has been associated with lower risk of cardiovascular disease, possibly due to their high potassium and lycopene content.

#### CANCER

Current research suggests that lycopene's antioxidant properties may provide a protective effect against certain cancers including breast, colorectal and prostate cancers.

#### LYCOPENE

Tomatoes are one of the sole sources of lycopene, an antioxidant that gives tomatoes their rich red color. Heat-processed tomato products, including spaghetti sauce and ketchup, deliver more lycopene than the equivalent amount of fresh tomatoes. Heat breaks down the cell walls of tomatoes, thus making lycopene more readily available. Lycopene is also fat soluble, and more easily absorbed if eaten with foods containing fat. Add a little olive or canola oil to your favorite tomato-based dishes to reap the full benefits of lycopene.

#### Did you Know?

The original Rutgers tomato, introduced in 1934, was recently recreated during Rutgers' 250th year thanks to preservation of the historic seeds by the Campbell Soup Company!

### *I Like-opene Tomatoes*

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References: *Health Information and Research*. Available at: <https://www.floridatomatoes.org/health/health-information-and-research/>. Accessed on: 2/11/19. *How to Get Maximum Health Benefits from Tomatoes*. Available at: [https://www.nutritionletter.tufts.edu/issues/10\\_7/current-articles/How-to-Get-Maximum-Health-Benefits-from-Tomatoes\\_1495-1.html](https://www.nutritionletter.tufts.edu/issues/10_7/current-articles/How-to-Get-Maximum-Health-Benefits-from-Tomatoes_1495-1.html). Accessed on: 2/11/19. *Rutgers Tomato Gets Re-invented for 250<sup>th</sup> Year*. Available at: <https://sebsnjaesnews.rutgers.edu/2016/04/whats-in-season-from-the-garden-state-revolutionary-for-250-years-the-historic->

Questions? Like us on Facebook (**RU Healthy Dining Team**), follow us on Twitter (**@ru\_hdt**), Instagram (**@ru\_hdt**), Snapchat (**ru\_hdt**) or email **peggyp@dining.rutgers.edu**.