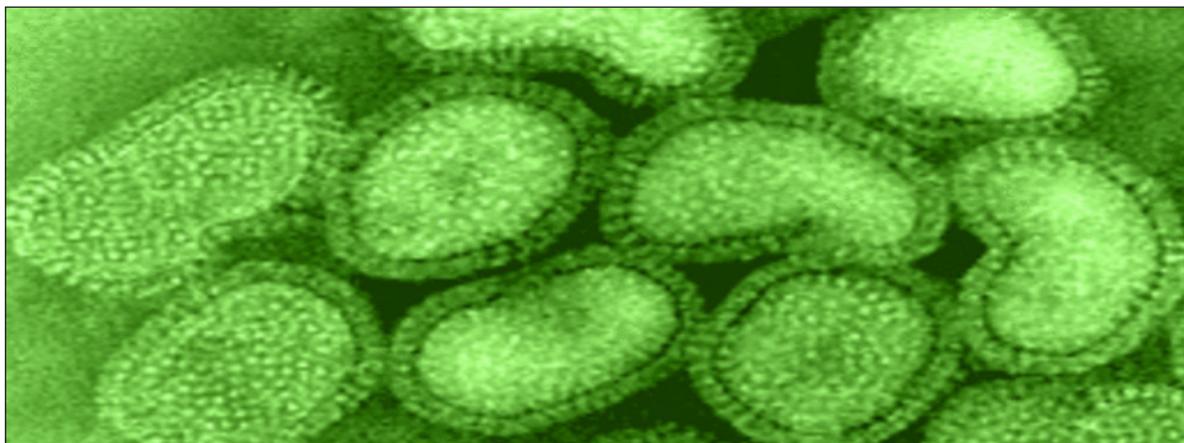


Meet the Microbes

Germs are all around us. They're in the soil, in the air, and in the water. Germs are even found on us and in us! They live on your hair, skin, teeth, and in your stomach. But even if you look carefully, you can't see them. Germs are so tiny that they can only be seen with the help of a microscope. This is why germs are sometimes called microorganisms or microbes.



The Invaders

In order to cause disease, harmful germs must first find a way to get into the body. Most often, they enter through the eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs can enter your body when you touch a sick person's hands or something they have just touched, like a doorknob or a faucet handle. Then when you touch your eyes, nose, or mouth, the germs can get into your body.

In Your Hands

You will not be able to prevent all illnesses caused by germs, but there are some things that you can do to reduce your chances of getting sick. The most important thing you can do to avoid infections is to wash your hands. This may sound too easy. But if you think about it, it makes sense. Washing your hands often will wash away many of the harmful germs that you pick up from touching other people or objects.

When should you wash your hands? Here are the most important times:

- Before and after preparing food
- Before you eat
- After you use the bathroom
- After handling animals or animal waste
- When your hands are dirty

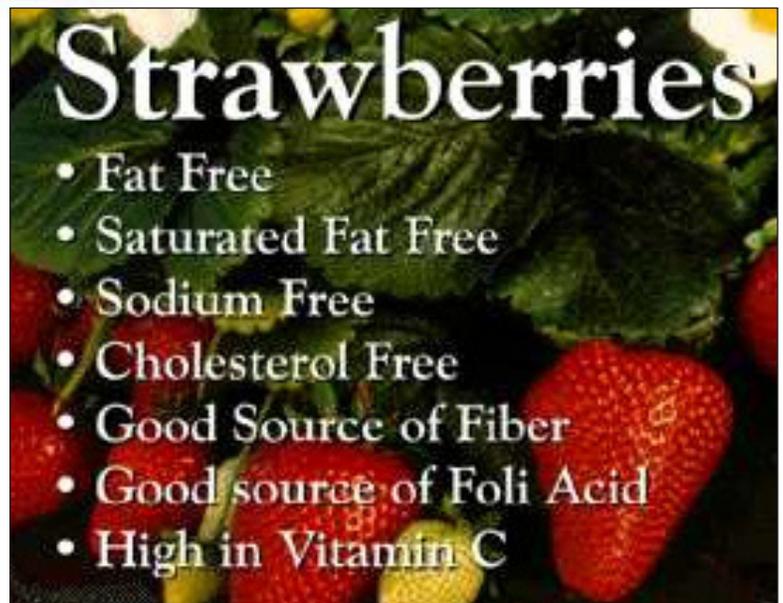
Of course, you should wash your hands more often when someone in your family is sick.

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5 Things You Didn't Know About Strawberries

There's nothing like spotting the first sweet ripe strawberries of the season at your local farmer's market. However you like them, we're betting your strawberry knowledge didn't run this deep — until now:

1. Strawberries are the only fruit that wear their seeds on the outside. The average berry is adorned with some 200 of them. No wonder it only takes one bite to get seeds stuck in your teeth.
2. Strawberries aren't true berries, like blueberries or even grapes. Technically, a berry has its seeds on the inside.
3. Strawberries are members of the rose family. Should you come upon a bush of them growing, you'll see: they smell as sweet as they taste.
4. Strawberries are believed to help reduce the risk of heart disease and certain cancers. They are low in calories and high in vitamins C, B6, K, fiber, folic acid, potassium and amino acids.
5. California produces some 80% of the strawberries in the U.S. They grow about 2 billion pounds of the heart-shaped fruits per year. Every state in the U.S. and every province in Canada grows their own.



10 Things You Didn't Know About Strawberries

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3. Strawberries are members of the rose family. Should you come upon a bush of them growing, you'll see: they smell as sweet as they taste.
4. The strawberry plant is a perennial. This means if you plant one now, it will come back next year and the following and the year after that. It may not bear fruit immediately, but once it does, it will remain productive for about five years.
5. Americans eat an average of three-and-a-half pounds of fresh strawberries each per year. It's closer to five pounds if you count frozen ones. In a study, more than half of nine-year-olds picked strawberries as their favorite fruit. They're nature's candy!

6. Native Americans ate strawberries long before European settlers arrived. As spring's first fruit, they were a treat, eaten freshly picked or baked into cornbread.

7. The ancient Romans thought strawberries had medicinal powers. They used them to treat everything from depression to fainting to fever, kidney stones, bad breath and sore throats.

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10. To store fresh strawberries, wash them and cut the stem away. However, if you plan to keep them in the fridge for a few days, wait until before you eat them to clean them. Rinsing them speeds up spoiling.



8 Health Benefits of Strawberries

1. Helps burn stored fat

The red coloring contains anthocyanins, which stimulate the burning of stored fat.

2. Boost short term memory

The anthocyanins boost short term memory by 100 percent in eight weeks. (The Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry)

3. Low in Calories – High in Fiber

One cup contains only 54 calories.

4. Ease Inflammation

Strawberries lower blood levels of C-reactive protein (CRP), a signal of inflammation (when part of the body becomes reddened, swollen, hot, and often painful, especially as a reaction to injury or infection) in the body.

5. Lower cardiovascular disease

Flavonoids — which are responsible for the colour and flavour of strawberries — lower the risk for heart disease.

6. Promote bone health

Strawberries contain potassium, vitamin K and magnesium which are important for bone health.

7. Anti-aging properties

Strawberries are filled with biotin, which helps build strong hair and nails. They also contain the antioxidant ellagic acid, which protects the elastic fibers in our skin to prevent sagging.

8. Good for weight loss

The compound nitrate found promotes blood flow and oxygen in our body, which is great for weight loss.

<http://www.healthdiaries.com/eatthis/8-health-benefits-of-strawberries.html>

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Why Strawberries Are Good To Eat

- We're an excellent source of vitamin C and just 100g has a whole day's supply.
- The small seeds embedded in our skin provide a good source of dietary fiber.
- We're also a good source of folate (one of the B vitamins)
- Our natural sweetness comes from the sugars fructose and glucose.

http://www.freshforkids.com.au/fruit_pages/strawberry/strawberry.html



Fall & Winter Vegetable Gardening

Who says gardens can't grow in fall and winter? In Southern California, we live in a wonderful climate that supports year-round vegetable gardens. Here's some gardening tips to help with your fall and winter planting.

Vegetables

Because our climate stays above freezing (except for a couple of nights in January and February) it's safe to plant vegetables in fall and winter.

Pull out summer vegetables that have stopped producing. Buy six packs of seasonal vegetables including beets, cabbage, broccoli, celery, cauliflower, turnips, garlic, peas, spinach, Brussels sprouts and lettuce. Plant them in well-cultivated and amended soil. Water as the rainy season dictates. Also perfect for planting in the fall and winter: peppers, green onions, beans, lettuce and radishes.

Winter Vegetables



When planting vegetables in containers you want to make sure that your pots have good drainage otherwise the roots will start to rot and your vegetables will not be happy.

Herbs

This is a great time to start your windowsill herb garden. Try basil, thyme, rosemary and Italian parsley.

<http://www.agromin.com/guide-fall-and-winter-vegetable-gardening.html#.U82eAUC8Ayk>



Basil

Rob Cardillo

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