Hemp seeds have a rich, nutty flavor, something like sunflower seeds. Hemp milk is made by pulverizing the seeds, blending them with water and straining out the solid residue. The resulting "milk" provides both omega-6 and omega-3 essential fatty acids in a healthy three-to-one ratio. However, the omega-3 in hemp is alpha-linolenic acid, not the more desirable forms (EPA and DHA) found in fish oil. Other nutrients include magnesium, phytosterols, ascorbic acid, beta-carotene, calcium, fiber, iron, potassium, phosphorus, riboflavin, niacin and thiamin.

Hemp milk also contains 10 essential amino acids, making it a good vegetarian source of protein (although I’ve read that the quality of protein in hemp may not measure up to soy protein). However, according to the manufacturer of one brand of the milk, hemp protein does not contain phytates, enzyme inhibitors found in some soy protein that can interfere with the assimilation of essential minerals.

The same manufacturer maintains that hemp protein is more digestible than soy protein because unlike soy, it contains no oligosaccharides, complex sugars that can cause flatulence if not properly broken down during digestion.

Hemp milk is said to taste more creamy and nutty than soy milk or rice milk. And it tends to be a bit thicker than those other products, but you should still avoid any product that uses carrageenan as a thickening agent. Overall, I think hemp milk is a good thing. Try it.

--Andrew Weil, M.D.

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**COLOR YOUR DIET: FRESH FRUIT 7 WAYS**

**YOU** can enjoy fresh fruits as they come: whole or perhaps sliced. But with minimal work, you can transform fresh fruit into lively snacks, side dishes, desserts and meals. Here are 10 ways to reinvent and rediscover these sweet options.

**GRILLED FRUIT SLICES.**
Cut apples, pears or peaches into chunks, brush lightly with canola oil and sprinkle with cinnamon. Place on skewers or wrap in foil. Grill on low heat for 3 to 5 minutes.

**LEMON-LIME FRUIT DIP.**
Mix together 1/2 cup low-fat, sugar-free lemon yogurt, 1 teaspoon fresh lime juice and 1 teaspoon lime zest. Serve with pineapple chunks, strawberries, diced kiwi, sliced bananas and grapes.

**ROMAINE & FRESH STRAWBERRY SALAD.**
Combine 2 cups romaine lettuce and 1/2 cup sliced strawberries in a bowl. Drizzle with 1 1/2 tablespoons raspberry vinaigrette dressing and toss well. Sprinkle with 1 tablespoon cashews.

**BLUEBERRY-BANANA SMOOTHIE.**
In a blender, add 2 fresh or frozen bananas, 1/2 cup fresh or frozen blueberries, and 1 cup low-fat vanilla yogurt. Blend until smooth.

**PLUM SALSA.** Mix together 1 cup chopped plum, 1 teaspoon dried cilantro, 2 tablespoons chopped onion, 2 teaspoons cider vinegar, 1/4 teaspoon hot sauce and 1/8 teaspoon salt. Serve with roasted or grilled chicken breasts.

**BROILED FRUIT KEBABS.**
Thread cubed fruit, such as cantaloupe, pineapple, mango or honeydew, onto skewers. Place skewers on a baking sheet and sprinkle with brown sugar. Broil until slightly bubbly, about 2 minutes on each side.

**BERRIES A LA MODE.** Place 2 cup berries, such as raspberries, blueberries or strawberries, in a baking dish. Sprinkle with 1/8 teaspoon cinnamon and 1/3 cup low-fat granola. Bake at 350 F until fruit is bubbling, about 30 minutes. Top each serving with 1/2 cup fat-free vanilla ice cream.

- The Mayo Clinic

Hemp milk is a good source of essential nutrients and can be enjoyed in various ways. Try experimenting with it in your diet to see how it suits your tastes and needs. Enjoy fresh fruits with minimal work to create lively snacks, side dishes, desserts, and meals!
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