

Health Benefits of Kelp

Kelp is a group of large sea algae that is commonly referred to as seaweed. This amazing plant species has been used for many years by sea dwelling cultures. It is renowned for its powerful nutritional benefits.

The Sea Vegetable PowerHouse

Kelp is part of the brown algae family in the order of Laminariales. There are about 30 different genera of this form. In the 19th century, the word "kelp" was used to describe seaweeds that were burned to form soda ash (sodium carbonate).

Kelp grows in shallow, underwater oceanic forests. It depends on cool temperatures between 43-57 degrees F (6-14 degrees C). Some kelp species grow well over a foot a day and can reach heights of 250 ft. These kelp species are easily harvested due to their surface canopy and underwater growth rate.

Kelp is Rich in Alkaline Buffering Nutrients:

Kelp is extraordinarily rich in alkaline buffering nutrients such as sodium, potassium, magnesium, and calcium. It is also a phenomenal source of chlorophyll to boost blood cell formation and purify the body.

Kelp is considered the world's most potent source of naturally occurring iodine. Some species have been known to concentrate iodine by up to 30,000 times the amount in sea water. Iodine deficiencies are becoming increasingly common throughout the world. The areas with the least amount of iodine deficiencies are typically coastal regions where seaweed is readily available. Iodine deficiencies are known to cause

hypothyroidism and goiter formation. Kelp has been used for many years as a remedy for these problems.

Kelp Boosts Glutathione Levels:

The Japanese call several Pacific species of kelp Kombu. These cultures use Kombu in many traditional dishes such as soups, stews, and sushi. Kombu is a powerful source of natural glutamic acid which is a precursor to the body's master antioxidant, glutathione. Kombu is often used to soften beans during cooking and help convert challenging sugars into a more digestible form and thus reduce flatulence.

Sea vegetables like kelp are also a great source of the mineral vanadium. Vanadium helps form the haloperoxidase enzymes that help provide a natural antioxidant defense that has allowed these sea vegetables to flourish. Vanadium is a critical trace mineral that enhances insulin signaling and blood sugar balance by inhibiting the tyrosine phosphatase enzyme. This process also reduces glucose formation and enhances the body's ability to store sugar in the form of muscle and liver glycogen. This is an important adaptation that helps the body withstand stress more effectively.

Kelp Has Unique Sulfated PolySaccharides:

Sea vegetables also contain a unique group of polysaccharides called fucoidans. These fucoidans have a characteristic branching pattern with sulfur containing molecules. They are being widely studied for their ability to reduce inflammation within the body. These sulfated fucoidans have been shown to reduce pain, fight viruses, and prevent atherosclerosis.

Fucoidans produce their anti-inflammatory effects by blocking selectin production and inhibiting pro-inflammatory prostaglandins and enzymes. Selectins are glycoproteins (sugar-protein molecules) that are often used to signal inflammatory processes in the body. Fucoidans also inhibit the

enzyme Pphospholipase A2 (PLA-2) that turns on inflammatory processes.

Immune Boosting Activity:

These sulfated polysaccharides have also been shown to block the typical binding sites for many viruses such as Herpes. By blocking binding sites, the virus is unable to replicate. Without adequate replication, the viruses are unable to survive.

These sulfated polysaccharides are also revered for their powerful ability to reduce blood clots. Heparin (Coumadin) is a popular medical agent used to reduce clots. Heparin is also a sulfated polysaccharide although it is a synthetically derived form. Both of these reduce platelet cell coagulation that forms blood clots. Heparin comes with a number of dangerous side effects while naturally occurring sulfated polysaccharides in kelp have no known side effects.

Sources for This Article:

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