

## Lifestyle &amp; Culture

# Avocados and hormones: Exploring the link



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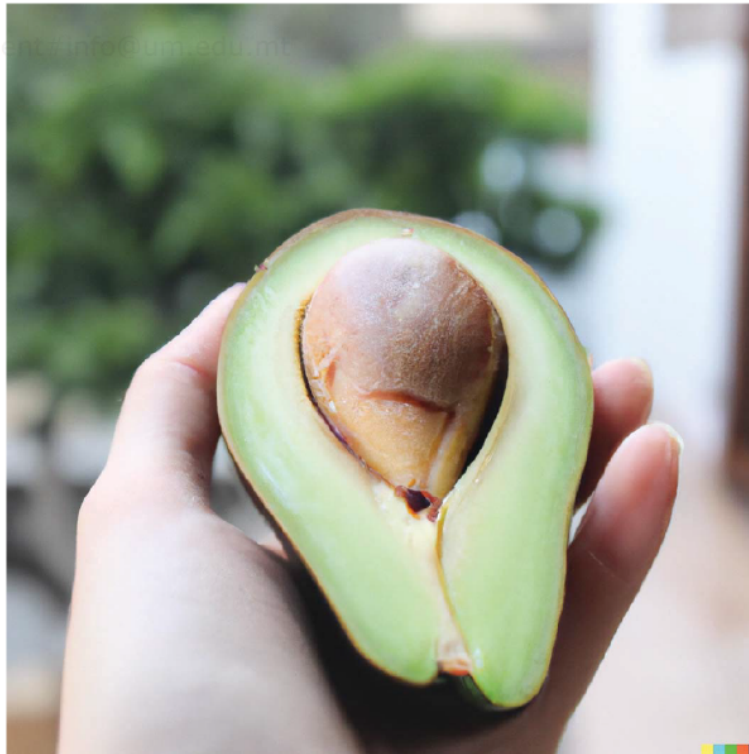
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The avocado is a fruit that has become increasingly popular in recent years. It is often touted as a superfood, praised for its high nutritional value as it is a rich source of healthy fats, vitamins and minerals, making it a popular addition to many diets. Besides its nutritional value, recent studies have shown that avocados have a positive effect on hormone regulation in the human body. In this article, we will explore the link between avocados and hormones, and what the science says about their effects on the body.

Hormones are chemical messengers that are produced in the endocrine glands and travel largely through the bloodstream to different parts of the body. Hormones act to regulate various bodily functions, such as metabolism, growth and development and reproduction. They are produced by various glands in the body, including the pituitary, thyroid and adrenal glands, and can be influenced by various factors, such as diet. Hormones are involved in a complex system of feedback mechanisms that work together to maintain balance in the body and any disruption to this balance can lead to a variety of health problems, including infertility, weight gain and mood disorders. Therefore, maintaining healthy hormone levels is crucial for overall well-being.

Several studies have suggested that avocados may have a positive impact on hormone regulation in the human body. One study investigated the impact of avocado consumption on hormone levels in healthy overweight and obese men and women. The study found that consuming one avocado per day for six weeks resulted in a significant decrease in cortisol levels, a hormone associated with stress. The study also found that consuming avocados resulted in an increase in adiponectin levels, a hormone that helps regulate glucose metabolism and insulin sensitivity.

In addition, healthy fats present within avocados further contribute to the regulation of hormones involved in controlling appetite. Avocados are particularly rich in monounsaturated fats, which have been found to help regulate the production of hormones in



the body. A diet high in monounsaturated fats, such as those found in avocados, can increase the production of hormones that promote feelings of fullness and satiety, while reducing the production of hormones that stimulate appetite.

Avocados are also a good source of fibre, which have been shown to help regulate hormone levels in the body. Fibre helps to slow the absorption of carbohydrates in the digestive system, which in turn can help regulate insulin levels. Insulin is a hormone that plays a key role in regulating blood sugar levels and imbalances in insulin levels can lead to health problems such as diabetes and metabolic syndrome. Fibre may also have a positive impact on the gut microbiome. A healthy gut microbiome is essential for optimal hormone function as it is responsible for the production and metabolism of certain hormones.

Apart from regulating hormones which have a major role in our eating habits, avocados may also regulate reproductive hormones. Postmenopausal women who consumed avocados had higher levels of estrogen than those who did not consume

the fruit. Estrogen is an important hormone in women that is responsible for various functions, including maintaining bone density and regulating the menstrual cycle.

Avocados were also noted to affect testosterone levels. Testosterone is a male sex hormone that is also present in females in smaller amounts. It plays an important role in the development of male sex organs, as well as in the development of muscle mass, bone density and body hair. Research has suggested that avocados may help to increase testosterone levels in the body. Men who consumed a diet high in monounsaturated fats, such as those found in avocados, had higher testosterone levels than those who consumed a diet low in these fats. Moreover, apart from helping to lower cholesterol levels in the body, plant sterols present within avocados may further regulate testosterone levels. Moreover, men who consumed a plant sterol supplement had higher testosterone levels in comparison to controls.

It is important to note that while avocados may have a positive effect on hormone regula-

tion, they should be consumed as part of a balanced diet. Eating too much of any one food can lead to an imbalance in nutrient intake and may have negative effects on health. Avocados are high in calories and excessive consumption can lead to weight gain. Therefore, it is recommended to consume avocados in moderation, alongside a variety of other healthy foods. Moreover, it is worth noting some of the adverse health effects attributed to improper avocado consumption.

One of the primary health risks associated with avocados is their high-fat content. Although the fat in avocados is mostly healthy monounsaturated fat, consuming too much of it can lead to weight gain and related health problems, such as heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure. Another potential health risk of consuming avocados is the presence of a toxin called persin. Persin is a naturally occurring compound found in avocados that can cause vomiting and diarrhea in animals. While humans can generally tolerate persin, people who are allergic to it, may experience an allergic reaction. Symptoms of an allergic reaction to persin can include

skin rash, hives and itching. However, persin is only present in the avocado skin, leaves and bark and not in the flesh.

In addition to the potential health risks associated with avocados, they can also interact with certain medications. For example, avocados can interact with blood thinners such as Warfarin, increasing the risk of bleeding. Warfarin is a medication used to prevent blood clots and avocados contain vitamin K, which can interfere with its effectiveness.

Avocados can also interact with drugs used to treat high cholesterol levels. Statins, a class of drugs used to lower cholesterol levels, can interact with grapefruit and other citrus fruits, including avocados. As a result, taking statins with avocados may increase the risk of side effects, including muscle pain and weakness.

Avocados are a nutritious and delicious addition to any diet and their potential benefits for hormonal health add another reason to enjoy this versatile fruit. While the potential relationship between avocados and hormones is intriguing, more research is needed to fully understand the link between avocados and hormones. Existing studies suggest that the consumption of avocados can have a positive effect on hormone regulation in the human body. The high content of monounsaturated fats, vitamin E, and other nutrients found in avocados can help regulate estrogen and testosterone levels, improve thyroid function and reduce the risk of developing certain diseases. Additionally, it is important to consume avocados in moderation to reap their health benefits as they are a calorie-dense food and excessive consumption can lead to weight gain and have potential risks, especially for people with specific health conditions or those taking certain medications. As with any food or medication, it is essential to consult a healthcare professional before consuming avocados, especially if you have any underlying health conditions or are taking medications.

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