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## “The Apple” Forbidden Fruit or Not?

**Question:** Why didn't the two worms go into Noah's ark in an apple?

**Answer:** Because everyone had to go in pairs !

Delicious and crunchy apple fruit is the most popular fruit favoured by health conscious, fitness freaks who believe in “health is wealth”. This wonderful fruit jam-packed with rich nutrients that in the true sense are indispensable for optimal health. The antioxidants in apple have many health promoting and disease prevention properties; thus justifying the adage “*an apple a day keeps the doctor away*”.

The apple is the pomaceous fruit of the apple tree, species *Malus domestica* in the rose family. It is one of the most widely cultivated tree fruits, and the most widely known of the many members of genus *Malus* that are used by humans.

The tree originated in Western Asia, where its wild ancestor, the Alma, is still found today. There are more than 7,500 known cultivars of apples, resulting in a range of desired characteristics. Cultivars vary in their yield and

the ultimate size of the tree, even when grown on the same rootstock.

At least 55 million tonnes of apples are grown worldwide, with a value of about \$10 billion. China produces about 35% of this total. The United States is the second-leading producer, with more than 7.5% of world production. Iran is third, followed by Turkey, Russia, Italy and India.

### Health benefits of the apple

- Delicious and crunchy apple fruit is the most popular fruit that contains an impressive list of essential nutrients, which are required for normal growth and development and overall nutritional well-being.
- Apples are low in calories; 100 g of fresh fruit slices provide only 50 calories. They however contain no saturated fats or cholesterol; but are rich in dietary fibre which helps prevent absorption of dietary LDL cholesterol in the gut. The dietary fibres also help protect the mucous membrane of the colon from exposure to toxic substances by binding to cancer causing chemicals in the colon.

- Apple fruit contains good quantities of *vitamin-C* and *beta carotene*. Vitamin C is a powerful natural antioxidant. Consumption of vitamin C foods help the body develop resistance against infectious agents and scavenge harmful, pro-inflammatory free radicals from the body.
- Apples are rich in antioxidant *flavonoids* and *polyphenols*. The total measured anti-oxidant strength of 100 g apple fruit is 5900 TE. The important flavonoids in apples are quercetin, epicatechin, and procyanidin B2. Apples also have tartaric acid which gives a tart flavour to them. These compounds help protect the body from deleterious effects of free radicals.
- In addition, apple fruit is a good source of B-complex vitamins such as riboflavin, thiamine and pyridoxine (vitamin B-6), which helps our metabolism.
- Apples also contains small amounts of minerals like potassium, phosphorus and calcium. Potassium is an important component of cell and body fluids that helps control heart rate and blood pressure; thus counters the bad influences of sodium.