



HealthiestWeight

Morning Announcement
Week of September 8, 2014

Food for Thought

Healthy Food of the Week

Avocado

The avocado is a delicious fruit which grows on a tree that can be up to 20 to 80 feet tall. It's a pear-shaped green fruit that may have a black or green skin. In Florida, avocados that are mature enough to eat can be harvested in the summer and fall, and you may see some locally grown avocados in the grocery store this time of year. Perhaps you have an avocado tree in your yard or know someone who has one.

The avocado fruit does not ripen on the tree and is picked unripe and then left to ripen on the grocery store shelf or in the home. The fruit is ripe when the outside feels soft.

The nutritious avocado is a good source of fiber, vitamin C, vitamin B6, potassium and vitamin E. The avocado also contains monounsaturated fat, which is a healthy fat that our bodies need to help absorb certain vitamins, and also helps to lower "bad" cholesterol (LDL) levels and may raise the "good" cholesterol (HDL) levels.

Avocados can be eaten raw or mashed, spread on crackers or used in sandwiches instead of mayonnaise. In guacamole and salsa dips the avocado is an essential ingredient.

You could try to grow your own avocado tree by saving the large seed from an avocado. Remove and wash the seed from inside the fruit and place the largest side of the seed down in a small jar of water with the upper half of the seed above the water. You will start to see the stem and the roots sprout in about two to six weeks. After the sprout starts to grow taller and the roots fill the jar of water you can then plant the sprouted seed in soil leaving half of the seed above the dirt. Make sure your little tree gets sunlight, and water it enough to keep the soil moist but not too wet.

One goal for healthy living is to eat at least 5 fruits and vegetables a day, and the avocado could certainly be one of your choices!

This message is from the school nurses at the Florida Department of Health in Okeechobee County.

References:

1. www.freshfromflorida.com
2. <http://www.harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/>