

**FRUITS - THE MEDICINE OF THE FUTURE!**

Would we be able to say how many fruits and/or vegetables did we consume today? Honestly, if the answer does not come to our mind quickly, maybe we're putting aside the consumption of healthy and important foods, rather than the others, which in most cases does not provide nutritional conditions that we expect and need daily. Nowadays the modern man has changed their social habits, and among the several new adaptations and desires, he wants to live longer and better, and this is good! For the food industry, of course, the perspectives are promising. The changes in our everyday lives boosted the new agro-industrial model, making them to think that besides the convenience, the pleasure and the flavor of a food, the nutritional issue, the health itself, would be (and is!) one of the main attributes to be taken into consideration in the conception of a new product, even when we think of juices, nectars, sweets, biscuits, fast food, pasta, or even chocolate, which recently entered the world of functional foods. Just to give you an idea of the importance of the agribusiness toward functional foods, the World Health Organization (WHO) recently "liberated" the maximum daily consumption of 50 grams for being the chocolate a functional food, composed by pulp and cocoa butter (typical fruit of the northeast of Brazil), a proven ingredient that brings benefits to human health.

Besides nourishing, they may also promote the health and even prevent illnesses, thereby are defined "the functional foods." In the last two decades they gained strength and status of medicines, although not being, because they may be consumed without a prescription. They came out from nature, where they initially were discovered and have gained the supermarket shelves. For that, several studies have reinforced the importance of functional foods for a healthy lifestyle and the good news is that our fruits, those produced in the Amazon, Cerrado, Caatinga, in the Atlantic Forest and in the southern states of Brazil, where the climate is temperate, are among the main objects of attention of researchers. Besides the nutritional composition and being already well known, we are here speaking of proteins, carbohydrates, lipids and the minerals in general, the functional foods or also called nutraceuticals, can trigger in the biological systems metabolic and physiologic effects synergistic to health. According to several researchers, the fruits have in its biochemical constitution bioactive principles able to prevent and/or reduce the risk of illness. In this regard, the influence of these biocompounds on human metabolism has been studied mainly in relation to cardiovascular, inflammatory, bowel, cancer, diabetes, hypertension, obesity diseases, and certain rheumatic disorders and even Alzheimer's.

Functional and in satisfactory quantities, the substances contained in fruits may be able to protect cells against degenerative processes, acting in the possible prevention of infections and diseases, providing sustainability and maintenance of reparatory and compensator metabolisms as the antioxidant function. According to specialists, the incidence and progression of chronic diseases are partly triggered just by inappropriate balance of these functional components in biological systems, among which we can mention the phenolic compounds, the carotenoids, the flavonoids, the anthocyanins, the terpenes, the vitamin C, among other phytochemicals commonly present in almost all fruits found in the Brazilian fruitculture. This bioprotector effect is proven in numerous epidemiological studies where these components have high antioxidant and anti-inflammatory activity, reducing, in the case of certain types of cancers, the multiplication of harmful cells to our body. Evidently, the increase in social symptomatology is also due to unbalanced lifestyle, which involves poor eating habits and sedentary lifestyle, however, regular consumption of functional foods, of which there is no better representative as fruits, that could be co-participatory alternative to improve health conditions, containing, on the other hand, the advancement of unbridled scary clinical situations. So if we're not including functional foods in our diet because we find it too complicate or expensive, now we no longer have any excuse because with only one type of fruit per day in our diet, we are moving towards a better quality of life. Several sentences and thoughts can summarize, or even boost, the search for a better life, however, one is quite straightforward: "... we are what we eat."

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