

Asthma Awareness Week 1 – 7 September: Mums-to-be advised to eat an apple a day

Today is the start of Asthma Awareness Week and mums-to-be are being encouraged to eat apples to protect their children from developing asthma in later life.

According to dietitian Karen Kingham, "scientific research has shown that the children of mums-to-be who ate apples when pregnant were less likely to have asthma or asthma symptoms at the age of five."

The study, published in an international journal of respiratory medicine¹, looked at a range of different foods and found that the only food to have a protective benefit against the development of asthma was apples.

"The association found with apples in this study - and not with total fruit, citrus, fruit juice or vegetable consumption – clearly suggests a benefit specific to apples," said Karen.

"In fact, apple consumption has been linked to protection against asthma in a number of studies including an Australian investigation of young adults² where eating whole apples daily was found to protect against both asthma and bronchial hyper-reactivity."

It is thought to be the high antioxidant content of apples - and in particular the presence of flavonoids - that provides the protective benefit for asthma and wheezing.

"Of all commonly consumed fruits in Australia, apples offer the most potent source of antioxidants with almost five times the antioxidant capacity of bananas and more than twice that of an orange," said Karen.

"The research linking apples with asthma benefits is promising. And along with their convenience, availability and value for money, makes apples a great choice for boosting antioxidant intake this spring."

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About Karen Kingham - Karen Kingham loves good food. A dietitian and freelance nutrition writer, she is passionate about sharing her knowledge to help people enjoy the benefits of great tasting food that brings both pleasure and wellbeing to their lives. Karen is the author of several healthy cookbooks and is the resident nutrition expert for the new BBC Australian Good Food magazine.

Released on behalf of Aussie Apples.

For photography, further information or interview with Karen Kingham, please contact Bite Communications:

Luisa Volpato 0405 802 299 or Andrea Brydges 0418 443 886

¹ Willers et al. Maternal food consumption during pregnancy and asthma, respiratory and atopic symptoms in 5-year old children. Thorax 2007; 62:773-779

² Woods R et al. Food & nutrient intakes and asthma risk in young adults. Am J Clin Nutr 2003; 78:414-421