

FRESH PINEAPPLE:

As America's fascination with, and demand for, cosmetic procedures grows, pineapple turns out to be just what the surgeon ordered

By: Jennifer A. Grossman

Biting into a juicy pineapple chunk, you may wonder, "How could something this lusciously sweet be good for me?"

Increasingly, however, pineapples are being recognized for an array of supremely beneficial nutrients. Above all, pineapple is the only source of bromelain, a proteolytic (e.g., protein-eating) enzyme that acts as an anti-inflammatory, which is one reason the fruit has been used for centuries in South and Central America to treat digestive problems. It also acts like a clean-up crew for your skin, sweeping away dead cells so damaged tissue can heal more quickly. Emerging research suggests pineapple's bromelain might also help promote skin health in other ways.

According to a study published in *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery*—the official medical journal of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS)—a nutrient combo including bromelain, vitamin C, rutin and grapeseed extract cuts down facelift recovery time by 17 percent. "Based on our findings, plastic surgeons can provide an even greater proactive approach to caring for patients and ensuring a greater degree of success to help their wounds heal," according to Rod Rohrich, MD, president of the ASPS.

According to another study, published in the journal *Cancer Letters*,

Indian researchers compared the incidence of tumors among mice predisposed to skin cancer after bathing some of the animals in bromelain. The bromelain-treated mice developed 66 percent fewer tumors—and even those tumors were 35 percent smaller than they would otherwise have been. Plus, 30 percent of the bromelain group never developed tumors at all.

Pineapple is also a top source of vitamin C, providing 130 percent of your daily needs per cup. New research shows that women who get the most vitamin C from their diets have smoother, moister, more youthful looking skin.

British researchers surveyed the dietary habits of more than 4,000 American women (ages 40 to 74) then deployed a team of dermatologists to examine the subjects' skin. The study found more signs of aging—wrinkles, dryness, thinning of skin—among those with lower vitamin C intakes. The reason? The body needs vitamin C to spur skin cell turnover and collagen formation. The last two nutrients in the speed-healing cocktail used in the ASPS study—rutin and grapeseed extract—act as handmaidens to vitamin C, protecting the vitamin from oxidation and strengthening capillaries.

Finally, that cup of pineapple also provides 80 percent of your daily manganese. This is also essential for anyone recovering from a procedure, whether it's a major event, such as a facelift, or something minor, like a facial filler.

The healing of wounds requires increased production of cartilage and

collagen, and manganese helps support this demand, which makes adequate dietary manganese especially important during recovery from injury. A Polish study, for example, found that certain cancer-fighting drugs, which impair collagen synthesis and delay wound healing, work by immobilizing manganese, so that it can't activate the collagen-building enzyme.

So, whether you've just had "a little work done," or simply skinned your knee, try dosing your diet with pineapple if you're looking to heal in a hurry.

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