

# Amaranth seeds may prevent chronic diseases

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The tiny seed of an amaranth grain may be able to help prevent cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer, according to a review of existing research in *Comprehensive Reviews in Food Science and Food Safety* published by the Institute of Food Technologists (IFT).

Amaranth is an ancient grain used in a variety of foods such as soups, stews, sauces, porridges, cookies, bread and more. In addition, its stems and leaves are also commonly used in animal feed.

The amaranth grain has gained interest in the past 20 years due to both its nutritional and agricultural features. It's fast growing, has a tolerance to [drought conditions](#), can grow in poor soils and is easily cultivated throughout the year making an ideal crop in regions where conventional crops cannot grow. Amaranth also contains high amounts of protein, minerals, B vitamins, lipids and is highly digestible.

Researchers from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Ciudad University in Culiacan, Sinaloa, Mexico found that from their review of studies, the amaranth grain could be used as a functional food; or peptides derived from amaranth could be used as ingredients in functional foods to help in the prevention and reduction of chronic diseases.

**More information:** Montoya-Rodríguez, A., Gómez-Favela, M. A., Reyes-Moreno, C., Milán-Carrillo, J. and González de Mejía, E. (2015), "Identification of Bioactive Peptide Sequences from Amaranth

(*Amaranthus hypochondriacus*) Seed Proteins and Their Potential Role in the Prevention of Chronic Diseases." *Comprehensive Reviews in Food Science and Food Safety*, 14: 139–158. doi: 10.1111/1541-4337.12125

Provided by Institute of Food Technologists

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