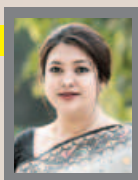


**A NOTE ON NUTRITION****CHOWDHURY  
TASNEEM HASIN**

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# Why dragon fruit is the best thing to happen to your diet

Once an exotic fruit grown in China and neighbouring countries, it has now become a summer staple in Bangladesh. Farming of pitaya — dragon fruit — is common and the tropical fruit has become popular for its unique external structure, sweet taste, and texture. As a superfood, dragon fruit offers maximum nutritional benefits with minimal calories and is packed with vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.

Despite being sweet, the fruit contains low sugar — only 9 grams of sugar from 100 grams of dragon. It has low cholesterol and can be included in a low-sodium diet. Pitaya has a burst of antioxidants and vitamin C, enough to meet our daily needs just by consumption of a single fruit. It is also high in magnesium and contains plenty of folates.

Dragon fruit comes in several colours — purple and white are more common. Due to its low sugar content, people suffering from diabetes can consume one medium-sized fruit or half of a large dragon fruit daily. They are best consumed after the main meal,

which will have a minimal effect on blood sugar.

It contains a large number of oligosaccharides that stimulate the good bacterial flora in our body, helping to improve digestion. Research suggests that dragon fruit can slow down cataracts and their maturation process.

Contrary to popular belief, dragon fruit suits pregnant and nursing mothers. Rich in vitamins B and C, and high in iron content, the fruit is ideal for consumption by expecting mothers.

As we all worry about the ageing process, pitaya can help to reduce wrinkles, pigmentation, and discolouration of our skin. The fruit's pulp can be used as a face pack for direct application on the skin.

Making smoothies with dragon fruit and milk can easily become a high-calcium food in our daily diet.

However, one word of caution — some people may be allergic to dragon fruit.

**Photo: Collected**

The writer is the Chief Clinical Dietitian and Head of the Department, United Hospital Limited

**Dragon fruit smoothie for a burst of flavours**

*Start your day with this fruit smoothie for a burst of flavours and vibrant colours. Packed with the goodness of bananas and dragon fruit, its lavender hue and slightly tart taste make for a delightful breakfast. Customise your bowl with your favourite toppings to make it uniquely yours.*

**Ingredients**

2 small dragon fruits  
4 large strawberries (optional)  
1 large banana  
½ cup milk

**For topping –**

1 tbsp desiccated coconuts  
¼ cup pomegranate arils  
1 tbsp slivered almonds

**Method**

Remove the leafy parts of strawberries and cut them into halves. Peel the banana and dragon fruit and slice them as well. Blend everything with milk until the consistency is smooth. Pour this into a bowl and top with desiccated coconut, slivered almonds, and pomegranate arils.