



Seafood and healthy living

The seafood is known for its huge amount of protein of high biological value, so provides all essential amino acids. It also provides a low content of fat and cholesterol (although it is common to think otherwise), and therefore, also provides a low calorie content, which means that seafood is important for balanced and low-fat diets.

Regarding the presence of vitamins and minerals, we can point out, in first place, vitamins A and B; and in the case of the minerals, especially zinc, phosphorus, iron, iodine and potassium. Thanks to its low fat and very low calorie content, its intake is particularly recommended as part of a low in fat, healthy, and balanced diet. It should be noted that the supply of essential fatty acids helps to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, such as atherosclerosis or coronary thrombosis, among others.

Mollusks are very healthy foods, whose nutritional benefits are:

- **Water:** between 75-80% of the weight is water;
- **Proteins:** (high biological value), in 100 grams of edible portion, 18-20 grams correspond to this nutrient;
- **Minerals:** among them stand calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, sodium, zinc, iodine, iron and chlorine;
- **Vitamins:** the most abundant are from group B and in a fewer quantity, vitamin A and vitamin D;
- **Polyunsaturated fatty acids:** considered very healthy for our body.
- They also provide cholesterol in amounts similar to those of meat and fish, but offset by the positive effects of good fats they contain;
- **Reduced energy value:** whenever cooking is carried out under non-fat methods and without sauces. They contribute on average 80 calories per 100 grams.

Based on all the nutritional characteristics mentioned above, we can say that they are very beneficial to health.

Thanks to their content of polyunsaturated fats that lower the risk of blood clots, we are protected against the appearance of cardiovascular disease, also reducing, in the blood, fats that are detrimental to the body as the "bad" LDL cholesterol. They provide high biological value proteins, necessary for proper growth and development. The calcium is beneficial for proper bone health and osteoporosis prevention.

The iodine content of the seafood prevents diseases such as goiter. Thanks to its low calorie content, it is a food that can be included in diets suitable for reducing body weight. The intake should be limited in case of: shellfish allergy, high uric acid, pregnancy, young children, women of childbearing age (the latter three because of their high content of heavy metals such as mercury).

A portion of Chilean mussels provides 324 mg. of EPA and DHA fatty acids, so its intake would bring benefits for cardiovascular health and nervous system. The EPA is known for acting in the reduction of triglycerides, cholesterol, along with having an anti-inflammatory, hypotensive and antiarrhythmic effect. As for the DHA, it is known as a protector of neurons because it prevents the premature death of these. That is, it has positive effects on the function of the nervous and visual systems, particularly in regulating insulin resistance and protecting the development of diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. Another interesting point of the study was the high contribution of the mussel's phytosterols, besides its low content of sodium, fat and calories, aspects that refute certain negative prejudices about this food. "A food that provides only 5.7% of the energy requirement per portion represents a very low percentage and the other interesting thing is the low carbohydrate content", said the researcher of the INTA. As for the essential amino acids, "there is a very interesting contribution. For example, in the case of the lysine, a portion of mussels provides 21% of the daily requirement of an amino acid important for the functioning of the body, while the threonine contributes a 23%", said Professor Valenzuela.