

## GRAPEFRUIT — The new superfruit?

The grapefruit is a type of citrus known for its sour taste. The fruit became popular after being bred in Jamaica in the 18th century and is found mainly in sub-tropic areas.

It is rich in vitamin C and potassium; it is a good source of folic acid, iron and calcium, and is an inexpensive way to add a boost of nutrition to your diet. But did you know that this fruit is known to help prevent a wide range of illnesses? This phenomenal fruit comes in many varieties, white, pink and red, being the most popular, and has been credited for being a great source of vitamin C, an aid in the prevention of the common cold and flu. Red and pink grapefruits have high amounts of vitamin A, potassium, folate, calcium, iron and also the antioxidant lycopene. Nutritionist Donovan Grant, says: "The grapefruit provides organic water; this means a lot of liquid is present inside the fruit which is water compatible to the cells, making it better for the body and also quenches thirst." He recommends grapefruit and grapefruit juice in an effort to maintain a healthy population and our current life expectancy rate. This fruit is also recommended for its health benefits by the American Heart Association to at-risk patients as well as those already diagnosed with heart disease. Grapefruit is said to be helpful in the treatment of acid reflux as it has an alkaline reaction after digestion. It also contains properties that may strengthen the arteries, cleanse the body of extra oestrogen &mdash; which may cause breast cancer &mdash; lower your cholesterol, and help to control diabetes. It has been known to relieve sore throat, aid in digestion, weight loss and insomnia, and in some cases it helps the stomach, preventing pancreatic cancer. Grapefruit also has the health benefit of preventing the symptoms of arthritis. Just recently, Trade Winds Citrus, producers of Tru-Juice, Wakefield and Freshhh juice drinks, introduced to the market grapefruit juice under its Tru-Juice umbrella. The new product comes to the market now primarily because this is the time of year when grapefruit becomes available, Peter McConnell, managing director of Trade Winds Citrus, explains. "Naturally, we would choose the best fruit at the peak of the season to make our products. We saw an opportunity to satisfy yet another of our consumers' requests by acquiring grapefruit from our local farmers who would not normally sell such large quantities of their fruit," McConnell said. But why grapefruit? McConnell makes a justification based on what he describes as a diversification of tastes Jamaicans have been developing. "We understand that on average, Jamaicans prefer sweeter juices, but there is a segment of the market that we will capture with this product. What we have also observed is the increased volume of imported grapefruit products which clearly indicated that persons were interested in the product. We also noted that Jamaicans' taste have changed over generations as there is an actual demand where one did not exist in past decades," he explained. Grapefruit and grapefruit juice are low in saturated fat, and cholesterol, so when included in a low-fat balanced eating plan, it can help to lower the risk of heart disease. Vitamin C also prevents the free radical damage that triggers the inflammatory cascade, and is therefore also associated with reduced severity of inflammatory conditions such as asthma, osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. Trade Winds juices, in particular Tru-Juice, are approved by the Medical Association of Jamaica.