Name _____ Reading informational text

Date _____

CALIFORNIA STRAWBERRIES™

Grades 4–5

More Than Just Sweet

A surprising and tasty salad ingredient
A cool strawberry ice cream cone on a hot day
A sweet addition to your fruit smoothie

The three phrases above are all reasons that strawberries are a favorite fruit of so many folks. But there is more to praise about strawberries than just how good they taste. This berry actually packs a big punch where your health is concerned. Read on to find out why strawberries are a smart choice for any day of the week that ends in a *Y*!

Heart Health Hero: You know that regular exercise can help keep you healthy, along with a diet with lots of fruits and veggies. But, did you know that strawberries are especially good for your heart? Nutrients like vitamin C, fiber, and potassium are great for protecting your heart. These nutrients are found in—you guessed it—strawberries. You don't have to eat buckets of berries to get the benefits. Consuming just eight strawberries a day increases the levels of these nutrients in your blood. This can reduce your risk of cardiovascular diseases, a group of disorders that includes diseases of the heart and blood vessels. A diet rich in strawberries can also lower the levels of "bad" cholesterol in your body. This substance can collect in the walls of your blood vessels and raise your chance of having a heart attack.





Boosting Vitamin C and Preventing Diabetes: Vitamin C is a superstar nutrient that can boost immunity, which is your body's ability to fight off disease. Just one serving of strawberries has more vitamin C than an orange. Eating strawberries can also lower a person's risk of getting diabetes. This is a dangerous disease in which the body cannot control the amount of sugar in the blood because it does not have enough of a substance called *insulin* or cannot use insulin properly.

Strawberries and Brain Power: Have a big test? Then plop some strawberries on your breakfast plate! Strawberries may help keep your brain fresh and strong. Here's another piece of great news that you might just want to pass on to your grandparents: eating just two cups of strawberries a day may help reduce a decline in cognitive abilities (thinking, understanding, learning, and remembering).

So, remember: those red berries floating in your morning cereal aren't just tasty. They're also a sweet and simple way to keep your good health game going strong.

Use evidence from the text to answer these questions on another sheet of paper.

1. List three ways that strawberries help a person maintain good health.
2. Why is the type of cholesterol mentioned in the second paragraph bad for your health?
3. What other word in the text means the same thing as *consuming* in the second paragraph?
4. True or false? You have to eat a lot of strawberries every day to get a health benefit.
5. How do you know your answer to question 4 is correct?

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"More Than Just Sweet"

Answer Key

1. Answers will vary but could include the following: They can increase the level of beneficial nutrients that protect your heart. They can reduce a person's risk of cardiovascular diseases. They can lower levels of "bad" cholesterol and reduce your risk of heart attack. They can help boost your immunity. They can lower your risk of getting diabetes. They can help fight against the decline in older adults' cognitive abilities.
2. It can collect in the walls of your blood vessels and raise your chance of having a heart attack.
3. eating
4. false
5. Answers will vary but could include the fact that eating eight berries a day leads to health benefits.



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Teacher Background Page

Know Your Strawberries

- Almost all of the strawberries you eat come from **California**.
- Strawberries are **low in sugar** and calories and high in vitamin C, potassium, folate, fiber, and antioxidants.
- The latest research suggests that just one serving of eight strawberries a day may improve **heart health**, help manage diabetes, support brain health, and reduce the risk of some cancers.
- California strawberries are fully **ripe when they are picked** and do not continue to ripen after harvesting. Fresh strawberries are packed by hand into the containers they're sold in right in the field.
- California farmers grow strawberries **year-round**, with April, May, and June as the peak months.
- There are **no genetically modified strawberries** commercially grown and shipped. Instead, using traditional plant breeding methods, different varieties of strawberries are developed for different climates and growing conditions.
- When buying fresh strawberries, choose berries that are **bright red**, have a natural shine, and have fresh-looking green caps. Refrigerate them and keep them dry until serving. Once you are ready to eat, rinse the strawberries in cool water and gently blot them dry.
- In a recent survey, more people named strawberries as their **favorite fruit** than any other fruit. Strawberries account for two-thirds of the berry sales in U.S. supermarkets.
- Ancient Romans and Greeks ate strawberries. In the middle ages, strawberries were carved into designs in churches because they **represented goodness**.
- May is **National Strawberry Month**.

Get a whole crop of fascinating and fun strawberry facts and recipes:

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