The newest discoveries on the power of food to treat health problems—from aging and diabetes to ulcers and yeast infections

Selene Yeager and the Editors of Prevention
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Food for What Ails You

At Prevention, we’ve always believed that good health comes first from the farm, and then from the pharmacy. That’s why we’ve spent so much time reviewing the latest scientific journals and talking with hundreds of top doctors and food experts to bring you this important reference. We want to be sure you are armed with the best and most recent advice and information on how to take advantage of something we all love to do (eat) and avoid something we all fear (disease). The new science we’ve tapped into amazes us—and surely it will amaze you, too.

Nearly every day researchers announce exciting discoveries that show how the foods we eat help fight disease. There is now no doubt that Mother Nature’s most delicious foods—from apples and broccoli to yogurt and zucchini—can be your best medicine for cutting cholesterol, losing weight, preventing cancer, beating allergies, reversing heart disease, and managing scores of other conditions.

On the following pages, you’ll find the foods that science says will help with conditions from allergies to yeast infections.

Anemia

There are many forms of anemia, but the most common is iron deficiency. Iron is an essential mineral that helps your cells get enough oxygen. Deprived of oxygen, you wilt. Anemia can make you feel sluggish and weak. Your brain feels fuzzy. You’re always cold. It’s estimated that about 20% of women and 3% of men in the United States have low iron stores. Luckily, this is generally an easy condition to correct. And the cure is our favorite thing—food.

Vegans take note

Anemia is much more common in people who don’t eat meat. In this case, the problem is due not only to a lack of iron but also to a lack of vitamin B12. This nutrient, which is needed for cells to divide and mature properly, comes mostly from animal foods. Consequently, strict vegetarians may get little or no B12 in their diets.

Take supplements or brewer’s yeast.

Feel the burn

Women who exercise are at higher risk for anemia, says Susan Kleiner, PhD, RD, owner of High Performance Nutrition in Mercer Island, Washington, and coauthor of The Good Mood Diet. That’s because the body uses more iron during exercise to meet the increased demand for oxygen. If you don’t have enough iron to begin with, it’s easy to run out while you’re working up a sweat.

Iron-Clad Solutions

Here are some ways to keep your iron level up.

Love those clams A bowl of 10 small steamed clams contains an astonishing 26 mg of iron. That’s more than three times the iron in a 3-ounce serving of chicken livers.

Don’t add calcium

When you’re taking iron supplements, having calcium-rich foods in the same meal may set you back. Fergus Clydesdale, PhD, distinguished professor and head of the department of food science at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, recommends spacing your calcium and iron 3 hours apart. For example, put milk on your cereal in the morning, but wait until later to take your iron supplement. The same goes for coffee and tea.

Do eat citrus

Pairing a food that contains vitamin C with an iron-rich food guarantees that you’ll get substantially more of the iron into your bloodstream because iron is best absorbed in an acidic environment.

Eat Up

Iron-rich foods

(p. 67)

Baked potato with skin

Steer Clear

Coffee, dairy, and tea within 3 hours of taking iron supplement
Anxiety

Eat up
Breakfast cereal
Cold-water fish
(p. 74)

Is life without your morning bagel not worth living? Does your passion for pasta know no bounds? Eat up—your moods will thank you for it.

A spoonful of serenity
A study conducted in Wales showed that eating breakfast cereal regularly was associated with reduced stress and improved physical and mental health. People who ate cereal each day had lower levels of cortisol, a hormone that rises with stress. Next, researchers hope to find the reason why.

Go fish
The omega-3 fatty acids in fish can calm you down. The omega-3s “help your nerves and therefore lower your anxiety level,” says Gretchen Vannice, MS, RD, research coordinator at Nordic Naturals, who has studied omega-3 fatty acids extensively.

Arthritis

Eat up
Cold-water fish*
(p. 74)
Cruciferous vegetables: broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, kale, turnips
Fresh ginger
Leafy greens

Although there isn’t a specific food that will help relieve arthritis in all people, doctors today recognize that what you eat—or, in some cases, don’t eat—can help ease discomfort and even slow the progression of the disease. The most common form of arthritis is osteoarthritis, which is caused by wear and tear on cartilage. When cartilage wears away, bone grinds against bone, causing pain and stiffness in the joints. Rheumatoid arthritis occurs when the immune system begins attacking the body instead of protecting it. These attacks cause swelling of the membrane that lines the joints, which eventually eats away at the joints’ cartilage. It is the form of arthritis most affected by diet.

Since so many things can exacerbate the pain of rheumatoid arthritis, knowing which foods, if any, to avoid can be difficult. So start by keeping track of what you eat whenever a flare-up occurs. If you discover a pattern you’ll have an idea of what to avoid in the future. Once you’ve identified a possible culprit, stop eating that food (or foods) for at least 5 days. Then try the food again and see if your symptoms return.

In the meantime, here are some actions to consider taking.

Fight fat
Some doctors recommend limiting dietary fat to no more than 25% of total calories, with no more than 7% of these calories coming from saturated fats. Just cutting back can make a difference: Use low-fat mayonnaise instead of the real thing, and replace butter, sour cream, and cheese with their lower-fat or fat-free counterparts. Eating a diet that’s largely vegetarian can also help reduce the amount of saturated fat that you eat.

Get fishy relief
Even though it’s generally a good idea to cut back on fats, there’s one type of fat that you should consider including in an anti-arthritis diet. Omega-3 fatty acids, found primarily in cold-water fish, reduce the body’s production of prostaglandins and leukotrienes, both substances that contribute to inflammation. Eat fish two or three times a week.

Go vegan
For people with rheumatoid arthritis, a vegan diet—which means no meat or other animal products—that also minimizes the use of wheat, salt, and oils may help, says Joel Fuhrman, MD, a specialist in nutritional medicine at Hunterdon Medical Center in Flemington, New Jersey, and coauthor of Eat to Live. Instead, you’d eat lots of leafy green vegetables in salads, vegetable-rich soups, and vegetable juice. In a study at Norway’s University of Oslo, 27 people with rheumatoid arthritis followed a vegetarian diet for 1 year. (After the first 3 to 5 months, they could eat dairy products if they wished.) They also avoided gluten (a protein found in wheat), refined sugar, salt, alcohol, and caffeine. After a month, their joints were less swollen and tender, and they had less morning stiffness and a stronger grip than people who followed their usual diets.

Boost your C intake
Researchers at Boston University School of Medicine studied the effects of omega-3 fatty acids on 30 people with osteoarthritis.

Vegetable juice
Extra virgin olive oil
Vitamin C–rich foods: acerola, broccoli, cantaloupe, cranberry juice, oranges, peppers, strawberries
*For rheumatoid arthritis
Common triggers
Alcoholic beverages
Butter
Caffeine: chocolate, coffee, tea, cola
Citrus fruit*
Corn*
Egg*
Full-fat dairy products*, esp. cheese and sour cream
Refined sugar
Salt*
Tomato
Wheat*
Oils (except extra virgin olive oil)*
*For rheumatoid arthritis

Go for the greens
Leafy greens, cruciferous vegetables, and storage vegetables like turnips and brussels sprouts are good sources of vitamin E, which may help slow the progress of arthritis.

Eat sprouts
...a study in Japan showed that compared to those who ate sprouts rarely, those who ate sprouts more than once a month were 65% less likely to have arthritis.

Eat ginger
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Eat nectarines
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Eat tomatoes
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Eat turnips
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Eat cauliflower
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Eat broccoli
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Eat brussels sprouts
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Eat radishes
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eating habits of people with osteoarthritis of the knee. They found that those getting the most vitamin C (more than 200 mg a day) were three times less likely to have the disease worsen than those who got the least vitamin C (less than 120 mg a day). “Vitamin C may also help generate collagen, which enhances the body’s ability to repair damage to the cartilage,” says study leader Timothy McAlindon, MD, MPH, who is now an associate professor of medicine at Tufts University in Boston. McAlindon recommends that people get at least 120 mg of vitamin C a day in their diets. If you can find the small, red, cherrylike fruit called acerola, try it. One little fruit, measuring an inch or less across, contains a whopping 81 mg of vitamin C.

**Try ginger** In a review of various therapies for osteoarthritis, researchers at the Musculoskeletal Research Center in New York City found that ginger extract was among the experimental therapies that showed promise in slowing or even reversing osteoarthritis. And a Danish study followed 56 people who had rheumatoid arthritis or osteoarthritis and who ate fresh or powdered ginger. Ginger produced relief in 55% of the study participants with osteoarthritis and 74% of those with rheumatoid arthritis. Some experts speculate that ginger, which has a chemical structure somewhat similar to that of aspirin, may ease arthritis pain by blocking the formation of inflammation-causing prostaglandins that cause pain and swelling. To soothe arthritis pain, brew a mild tea by putting three or four slices of fresh ginger in a cup of boiling water, suggests Charles Lo, MD, a doctor of Chinese medicine in private practice in Chicago. You can also try downing 1/2 teaspoon of powdered ginger or up to an ounce (about 6 teaspoons) of fresh ginger once a day.

### Measure Your Disease Risk

While antioxidants have shown their mettle against major health threats such as heart disease and cancer, they’re also useful in preventing lesser ailments. An example is muscle soreness. One study found that folks who are sedentary most of the time and then suddenly exercise intensely may find relief from aching muscles with vitamin E. It appears that vitamin E may reduce free-radical damage that can lead to muscle soreness.

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## Asthma

Airborne allergens and irritants aren’t the only asthma triggers—foods can set off an attack, too, according to experts at the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology. If you’ve ever suspected that a food was to blame for an attack, approach it with caution in the future.

Diet is the key to controlling asthma, says Richard N. Firshein, DO, medical director of the Firshein Center for Comprehensive Medicine in New York City and author of *Reversing Asthma*. Because the airways of people with asthma tend to stay inflamed long after the attack is over, much of the battle against the disease is a battle against inflammation. Here are some strategies that could help.

**Put antioxidants to work**

There’s some evidence that foods high in antioxidants block the effects of free radicals, which can help the airways return to normal. This is important because free radicals are produced in large amounts whenever there’s inflammation; they make the inflammation even worse. Three antioxidants that are thought to have special protective power are vitamins C and E and the trace mineral selenium. Research suggests that vitamin E can dramatically lower the risk of asthma. In a large study of 75,000 nurses, for example, Harvard University researchers found that those getting the most vitamin E in their diets were 47% less likely to have asthma than those getting the least. Vitamin E is found in almonds, sunflower seeds, whole grain cereals, spinach, and kale.

Research suggests that 200 mg a day—less than four times the Daily Value (DV) of 60 mg—will go a long way toward keeping your lungs strong. A 6-ounce glass of freshly squeezed orange juice delivers 93 mg of vitamin C, and 1 1/2 cups of baked butternut squash has 200 mg of vitamin C.

**Go nuts** Selenium is a trace mineral. In a study of 115 people, researchers in New Zealand found that those getting the most selenium in their diets were five times less likely to have asthma than those getting the least. The DV for selenium is 70 mcg. Meat, chicken, and seafood are good selenium selections. Even better, one Brazil nut contains 120 mcg. *Note:* Some people find that tree nuts cause asthma attacks.
Atherosclerosis

Eat Up
Antioxidant-rich foods (p. 70)
Banana
Pomegranate
Quinoa

"The best example of the damage free radicals can cause is atherosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries," says Balz Frei, PhD, professor of biochemistry and biophysics and the director and endowed chair of the Linus Pauling Institute at Oregon State University. And one of the best ways to fight those free radicals is with antioxidants.

Eat a plant-based diet
Fruits and vegetables contain an abundance of natural antioxidants, particularly vitamins C and E and beta-carotene, as well as dozens of additional free radical-fighting compounds. “When you look at long-term population studies, people eating vegetarian diets appear to gain protection from diseases that are believed to be related to free-radical damage,” says Robert R. Jenkins, PhD, retired professor of biology at Ithaca College. Aim for 200 to 400 mg of vitamin C and 100 to 400 IU of vitamin E daily.

Go bananas
This often-overlooked fruit helps prevent plaque from sticking to artery walls, making it a good defense against atherosclerosis. The best part is that you don’t have to eat a boatload to get these benefits, says David B. Young, PhD, professor emeritus of physiology and biophysics at the University of Mississippi Medical Center.

Choose this grain
A half cup of cooked quinoa provides 90 mg of magnesium, which appears to regulate cholesterol. This fiber-rich whole grain can help keep atherosclerosis at bay and also prevent arteries from narrowing.

Blood Pressure Control

Eat Up
Celery
Garlic
Pear
Plantain
Potassium-rich foods: apricot, avocado, banana, beans, lima beans, potato, steamed clams, Prunes, Raisins, Whole grains

Mild high blood pressure responds well to nondrug therapies. If you feed and exercise your body well, you may be able to calm your rushing blood and avoid blood pressure drugs and their troublesome side effects. Don’t be misled by the “mild” label, though. “Most heart attacks and strokes that occur do so in people with stage 1 high blood pressure [140 to 159 systolic (top number) or 90 to 99 diastolic (bottom number)],” says Norman Kaplan, MD, professor of internal medicine and hypertension specialist at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center.

Here are some ways to take control.

Eat sensibly
A good diet—with lots of fruits and vegetables and whole grains instead of rich foods—can help change a cardiovascular system that’s about to burst internally, says John A. McDougall, MD, medical director of the McDougall Program in Santa Rosa, California, and author of The McDougall Program for a Healthy Heart.

Reduce your salt intake
Experts believe that many people with high blood pressure are salt “responders,” meaning that their blood pressure levels depend on the amount of salt they eat. “But there is some controversy about the issue,” says Lawrence Appel, MD, professor of medicine and epidemiology at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. “Some people have a greater response than others. Older people tend to be more sensitive to salt, as are African Americans.” Some research shows that roughly 26% of Americans with normal blood pressure—and about 58% of those with hypertension—are salt sensitive. Hidden sources of salt are cheese, dried fruit, ice cream, instant chocolate-flavored pudding, ketchup, and pastries.

Reach for potassium
Studies show that people who eat a diet high in potassium-rich foods have a markedly lower risk of high blood pressure and related diseases like heart attack and stroke. Potassium is important because it seems to calm the spiking effect that salt has on blood pressure. The landmark Intersalt study looked at more than 10,000 people from 32 countries and found that people with the highest amounts of potassium in their diet had the lowest blood pressure, and those with the lowest amounts had the highest. Foods that are especially rich in potassium include beans, potatoes, avocados, steamed clams, lime beans, bananas, and apricots.

Bake a potato
For some people, increasing potassium in their diets by eating potatoes could reduce the need for blood pressure medication. In one study of 54 people with high blood pressure, half added potassium-rich foods such as potatoes to their diets, while the other half continued to eat their normal fare. By the end of the study, 81% of the potato eaters were able to control their blood pressure with less than half the medication they had used previously, according to pharmacist Robert R. Jenkins, PhD, retired professor of biology at Ithaca College.

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Earl Mindell, RPh, PhD, professor emeritus of nutrition at Pacific Western University and author of *Earl Mindell’s Food as Medicine.*

**Cut the fat**

It’s essential to reduce the amount of fat in your diet. You don’t have to be fanatical, however. Make small, gradual changes that will cut the total amount of fat you use in half, recommends Pao-Hwa Lin, PhD, assistant research professor of medicine at Duke University and author of *Eating Well, Living Well with Hypertension.* Buy butter substitutes and trans fat–free versions of margarine. For sautéing, use olive oil cooking spray instead of liquid oil or butter. Use mustard instead of mayonnaise, and snack on low-salt pretzels instead of potato chips.

**Chomp on celery**

In the United States, it took one man with high blood pressure and persistence to persuade researchers at the University of Chicago Medical Center to put this remedy to the scientific test. Rather than cutting back on salt as his doctor advised, he began eating ¼ pound (about four stalks) of celery per day. Within a week, his blood pressure had dropped from 158/96 to 118/82. His discovery was borne out in laboratory tests in which test animals’ blood pressure dropped an average of 12 to 14%. If you’d like to give celery a try, just remember that each stalk of celery contains 35 mg of sodium, and for some people, this can cause blood pressure to go up rather than down.

Literally hundreds of natural food compounds act as antioxidants in the body. And the nice thing about them is that you never have to run out, because you can just eat more antioxidant-rich foods.

When explaining where to find antioxidants, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) could be describing a rainbow: You’ll find beta-carotene in orange pumpkins, sweet potatoes, and carrots, as well as green spinach and kale; lycopene in red tomatoes and watermelon; lutein in collard greens and other leafy greens; and vitamin C in all sorts of colorful fruits and vegetables, from oranges to red peppers. Eat different kinds of antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables—the NCI recommends at least five servings a day—to ensure that your body gets a wide variety of antioxidants. And don’t forget plant foods that aren’t colorful fruits and vegetables, such as nuts, whole wheat bread, beans, and vegetable oils, for their antioxidant nutrients such as vitamin E and selenium.

**Antioxidants Rule**

Every time you eat fruits, vegetables, or other antioxidant-rich foods, a flood of these protective compounds enters your bloodstream. They travel throughout your body, stepping between your body’s healthy cells and the pillaging free radicals, offering up their own electrons to neutralize the free radicals and keep your cells out of harm’s way.

**Extraordinary Tea**

Want to buy a drink that stops cancer of the skin, lung, stomach, colon, small intestine, liver, breast, esophagus, and pancreas ... and even fights cavities? And heart disease and stroke? Then the next time you walk into an Asian restaurant, order a pot of tea. But don’t stop with one cup. At home, make some tea to accompany your meal. In the world of antioxidants, the phenols in tea are “absolutely exquisite,” says Gary Stoner, PhD, professor and cancer researcher at Ohio State University.

In one study, researchers at the University of Scranton found that of 39 antioxidants found in food, polyphenols from tea showed the greatest prowess at controlling free radicals, which have been linked to cancer, heart disease, and a number of less serious problems. Polyphenols, in fact, make up nearly 30% of tea’s dry weight, says Joe A. Vinson, PhD, professor of analytical chemistry. Both green and black tea have polyphenols. You can expect the following benefits from tea.

**Far-reaching results**

Whatever the cancer stage, tea can help. Cancer researcher Hasan Mukhtar, PhD, of the department of dermatology at the University of Wisconsin, has seen tea stop cancer at each stage of its life cycle, arresting both its growth...
and spread. And where cancerous tumors have already formed, he has seen tea shrink them.

**Lower breast cancer risk**

A meta-analysis (a type of study that evaluates the results of many previous studies) of studies on green tea conducted at the University of Minnesota found that those who drank the most green tea had a 22% lower risk of breast cancer.

**Reduced ovarian cancer risk**

A Swedish study of 61,000 women found that those who drank 2 cups of tea a day decreased their risk of ovarian cancer by 46%.

**Vegetarian Diets**

A plant-based diet—low in saturated fat and high in fiber, antioxidant vitamins, and a powerful array of protective chemicals—is the ultimate prescription for a longer, healthier life, says Virginia Mes-sina, MPH, RD, a dietitian in Port Townsend, Washington, and coauthor of *The Vegetarian Way*.

Research studies show that vegetarians have lower rates of cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and obesity than meat eaters. British researchers say vegetarians have a 20% lower risk of fatal heart disease and a 40% lower risk of cancer. In fact, vegetarian diets cut the risk of breast, colon, ovarian, and prostate cancers in a number of studies.

Nearly 40 years ago, a large study of 27,530 Seventh-Day Adventists, whose religion advocates a meatless diet, provided the first scientific link between vegetarian diets and better health. Researchers were amazed to discover that among the vegetarian Adventists, death rates from cancer were 50 to 70% lower than among other Americans.

Since then, study after study has confirmed the benefits of vegetarian eating. The magic ingredients include a slew of cancer-fighting phytochemicals. The naturally lower levels of saturated fat in most vegetarian diets (except those that rely heavily on cheese) sidestep a problem inherent in meat-rich diets: Diets high in saturated fat seem to promote production of a form of estrogen called estradiol, which is linked to breast cancer. In one study, women who ate the most animal fats had a one-third higher risk of breast cancer than those who ate the least. And another study found that vegetarians have higher levels of “natural killer cells”—special white blood cells that attack cancer cells—in their bloodstream.

**Beneficial Berries**

More than 9,000 phytochemicals have been identified in plant foods, with many more still to be named, scientists say. These are chemicals in the plants that have a variety of beneficial health effects. And berries, despite their diminutive size, can be powerful sources of phytochemicals.

One such phytochemical is a compound called ellagic acid, which is believed to help prevent cellular changes that can lead to cancer. All berries contain some ellagic acid, with raspberries and strawberries ranking among the top providers. In fact, berries—and the ellagic acid they contain—may help fight cancer on several fronts, says Stoner, who has worked on a number of studies involving blackberries. “It also detoxifies carcinogens,” he says.

But ellagic acid is just one of a host of cancer fighters in berries. They also contain flavonoids, tannins, phenolic acid, and lignans, which may help keep you cancer free through a variety of mechanisms, including their antioxidant power. A Cornell University study found that extracts from eight different varieties of strawberries significantly inhibited liver cancer cell growth in a lab study.

A University of Georgia lab study found that phenolic compounds extracted from blueberries could limit the ability of colon cancer cells to multiply and also trigger these renegade cells to die. Cancer cells can develop into tumors when they multiply too fast and stubbornly refuse to die—and even a little pressure to keep these cells in line can decrease the chance that a cancer will progress, according to the study authors. Thus, their findings “suggest that blueberry intake may reduce colon cancer risk.”

Some berries may have an ingredient that can help “starve” cancer. Louisiana State University researchers found that an extract from black raspberry can inhibit the growth of new blood vessels. Tumors coax the body to grow new blood vessels to feed them nutrients, and they can’t grow beyond a few millimeters without this food supply.

**Fiber: Mother Nature’s Broom**

Dietary fiber is simply the tough, structural parts of fruits, vegetables, legumes, and grains, so what makes it so good for us? The most important thing is this: Fiber doesn’t break down during digestion. Rather, it gets swept along more
Food for What Ails You

women who ate 28 g of fiber a day had a 38% lower risk of developing breast cancer than those getting half that amount.

Small but Mighty
Fruits and vegetables tend to get the spotlight during discussions of foods rich in cancer-fighting antioxidants. But several beans more than hold their own. In the USDA rating system of antioxidant capacities of hundreds of foods in the American diet, the pinto bean scored an impressive 11,864 and the red kidney bean scored 13,259. Other compounds in beans—such as lignans, isoflavones, saponins, phytic acid, and protease inhibitors—boost the benefits because they, too, have been shown to inhibit cancer cell growth. These compounds appear to keep normal cells from turning cancerous and prevent cancer cells from growing.

A study from the M. D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston found that people who ate the most foods containing phytoestrogens, such as beans, were the least likely to get lung cancer. Interestingly, men reduced their risk more than women—by 72% compared with 41%.

Beans also offer protection from breast cancer. A Harvard School of Public Health study found that women who ate beans twice a week had a 24% lower risk of developing breast cancer than women who rarely ate them.

The Champ: Flaxseed
Nowadays, because of its newfound fame as a health food, Americans are enjoying the slightly sweet, nutty taste of flaxseed. And they’re getting protection from cancer and heart disease as a reward.

Flaxseed is an incredibly rich source of a group of compounds called lignans. While many plant foods contain lignans, flaxseed has by far the most—at least 75 times more than any other plant food. (For example, you’d have to eat about 60 cups of fresh broccoli or 100 slices of whole wheat bread to get the same amount of lignans in 1/4 cup of flaxseed.)

The lignans in flaxseed are thought to fight changes in the body that can lead to cancer. “Lignans subdue cancerous changes once they’ve occurred, rendering them less likely to race out of control and develop into full-blown cancer,” says Lilian Thompson, PhD, professor of nutritional sciences at the University of Toronto, who conducts research on flax.

or less intact from the stomach to the intestines and from the intestines into the stool. This isn’t a problem. In fact, it’s precisely because fiber isn’t absorbed that it’s such a powerful healer.

Although we often talk about fiber as if it were a single substance, there are actually two main types—soluble and insoluble. Both pass through the intestine without being absorbed, but that’s where the similarity ends. Soluble and insoluble fiber act in totally different ways once they get inside the body, and as a result they help protect against different conditions.

For example, if you have a family history of colon cancer you may want to get more of the insoluble kind. A Japanese study published in the Journal of Epidemiology found a decreased risk of colon cancer with increased intakes of insoluble fiber. Strong research supports this conclusion: In a major study conducted by the American Cancer Society, researchers examined the whole grain, fruit, and vegetable intake of 62,609 men and 70,554 women and found that men with a high vegetable intake had a 30% lower risk of colon cancer, and men with a very low intake of vegetables and whole grains and women with a very low intake of fruits were more likely to have developed colon cancer 4 to 5 years later.

What’s good for the colon is also good for the breasts. Since the fiber in brown rice binds with estrogen in the digestive tract, there’s less of the hormone circulating in the bloodstream. This is important because high levels of estrogen have been shown to trigger changes in cells that can lead to breast cancer. A study by Australian and Canadian researchers found that women who ate 28 g of fiber a day had a 38% lower risk of developing breast cancer than those getting half that amount.

Expert Input
“Grains are a good source of fiber, but by eating berries, you get the fiber plus the added vitamins and minerals,” notes Jana Klauer, MD, a New York City–based physician who specializes in the biology of fat reduction. Berries are also very high in the immunity-boosting antioxidant vitamins C and E. In fact, strawberries are higher in vitamin C than oranges, she says. And blueberries are high in resveratrol, a powerful antioxidant that protects your heart and blood vessels and may increase longevity. As if that weren’t enough, berries are very low in calories—you can have a whole cup for around 80 to 100 calories.
After studying a group of 471 men in China, researchers found that the men who ate the largest number of onions had a much lower risk of prostate cancer than those who ate the least. In addition, eating onions was found to reduce the risk of cancers of the oral cavity and pharynx, esophageal cancer, colorectal cancer, laryngeal cancer, breast cancer, prostate cancer, and renal cell cancer in southern Europe. In a large study in the Netherlands, researchers looked at the diets of nearly 120,000 men and women. The more odoriferous bulbs these onion-loving Hollanders included in their daily diets, the lower their risks of stomach cancer.

**Great Bulbs of Power**

In laboratory studies, garlic appears to block the growth of cancer cells. Population studies show that people who eat lots of garlic have fewer stomach and colon cancers than those who eat the least. In a study of nearly 42,000 women, researchers at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health found that those who ate more than one serving of garlic—either one fresh clove or a shake of powder—a week were 35% less likely to get colon cancer than those who ate none.

Studies suggest that garlic can help block cancer in several ways: by preventing cell changes that lead to cancer, by stopping tumors from growing, or by killing the harmful cells outright. And the protection also extends to skin, liver, breast, and other cancers.

In another study, garlic showed just as much tumor-squelching promise as its close relative onion. Researchers gave one group of mice large amounts of garlic every day for 2 weeks; another group received no garlic. When the animals were exposed to cancer-inducing chemicals, the group that received the garlic developed 76% fewer tumors than those given only their normal food. Studies even show that a garlic compound called ajoene can shrink tumors—probably by promoting the body’s healthy, natural efforts to make cancer cells self-destruct, a process called apoptosis.

"If I had to take an educated guess, I’d say that eating three cloves of garlic a day might reduce your risk of many cancers by 20%,” says Robert I. Lin, PhD, executive vice president of Nutrition International Company in Irvine, California. "And eating six cloves could get you at least a 30% reduction,” he adds.

(In addition, flaxseed is very high in fiber. Just 3 tablespoons of seeds contain 3 g of fiber, or about 12% of the DV.)

Lignans show some promise for battling certain types of cancer, including breast cancer and ovarian and endometrial cancers, but the research is fairly inconclusive at this point.

In one study that looked at flaxseed’s effects on breast cancer, 16 women ate about 1 tablespoon of flaxseed every day for 2 months. At the end of the study, the women had a 31% improvement in the ratio of chemicals that protect against breast cancer over chemicals that promote breast cancer in their blood.

**HOW TO GET MORE FLAXSEED**

- Buy it processed. Whole flaxseed provides little benefit. The cracked or milled forms readily give up the nutritious goodness packed inside.
- Add a tablespoon of ground flaxseed on top of your salads, or bake it into bread and muffins. Mix it into meat loaf before you bake it.
- Get your day off to a good start with flax cereal, such as Uncle Sam’s or Nature’s Path. “Flax is great for elimination—it keeps you regular,” says Janet Maccaro, PhD, ND, a holistic nutritionist in Ormond Beach, Florida, and president of Janet’s Balance by Nature Products as well as author of Natural Health Remedies.
- Don’t care for the cereals that contain flax? Sprinkle the seeds into your favorite cereal for some added nutritional crunch.

**Terrific Tearjerker**

Grab an onion, a sharp knife, and a hanky, and start chopping your way to better health. Onions may be a key player in cancer prevention, especially cancers of the gastrointestinal tract, according to experts. “The primary flavonoid found in onions—quercetin—actually halts the progression of tumors in the colons of animals,” says Michael J. Wargovich, PhD, professor of pathology and microbiology at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine and director of the chemoprevention program at the South Carolina Cancer Center. Because onions also contain sulfur compounds, which damage cancer cells and slow their growth, they do double duty in suppressing tumors, he adds.

Onions have been shown to protect against many types of cancer.

After studying a group of 471 men in China, researchers found that the men who ate the largest number of onions had a much lower risk of prostate cancer than those who ate the least. In addition, eating onions was found to reduce the risk of cancers of the oral cavity and pharynx, esophageal cancer, colorectal cancer, laryngeal cancer, breast cancer, prostate cancer, and renal cell cancer in southern Europe. In a large study in the Netherlands, researchers looked at the diets of nearly 120,000 men and women. The more odoriferous bulbs these onion-loving Hollanders included in their daily diets, the lower their risks of stomach cancer.

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Spears of Protection
As you’ve come to expect from green vegetables, asparagus offers powerful protection against cancer. It contains a number of compounds that essentially double-team cancer-causing substances before they do harm.

Asparagus is richly endowed with folate, a B vitamin that is essential for helping cells regenerate. Five asparagus spears contain 110 mcg of folate, about 28% of the DV. In addition to folate, another protective compound in asparagus is glutathione, a powerful antioxidant.

The Healing Fungus
Mushrooms pack quite a punch when it comes to preventing breast cancer. Researchers at City of Hope, a Duarte, California, cancer research and treatment center, have found that the mushrooms suppress estrogen production, particularly in postmenopausal women. They conducted several studies on mice and found that these animals had a 58% reduction in the growth of breast tumors when they were fed mushroom extract.

The mushrooms contain a phytochemical called conjugated linoic acid that inhibits aromatase, the protein in the body that makes estrogen, says Shiuan Chen, PhD, director of the department of surgical research at City of Hope. About 60% of premenopausal women and 75% of postmenopausal women with breast cancer have a hormone-dependent cancer, which means estrogen helps tumors grow, so controlling estrogen levels can limit or prevent tumors. Postmenopausal women have smaller amounts of estrogen in their bodies, so the mushrooms provide even greater protection for them.

Shiitake mushrooms have long been used in Japan to shrink tumors. These large, meaty black mushrooms contain a polysaccharide, or complex sugar, called lentinan. Polysaccharides are large molecules similar in structure to bacteria, explains Robert Murphy, ND, a naturopathic doctor in Torrington, Connecticut. When you eat shiitake mushrooms, your immune system starts amassing an army of infection-fighting cells. “In essence, they fool the immune system into kicking into action,” he says. Researchers have found that when they feed lentinan in the form of dried mushroom powder to laboratory animals with tumors, they can inhibit tumor growth by 67%.

Crusading Crucifers
Get your kids or your grandkids into the habit of eating a ¼ cup serving of broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, kale, or turnips—several times a week. (A dash of salt, even a sprinkle of Parmesan cheese may help.) Harvard Medical School researchers suspect that these cruciferous veggies work best at cutting early-stage cancer risk in young men and women—in essence, stopping cancer before it starts.

“We know that those people who eat lots of cruciferous vegetables are protected from many forms of cancer,” says Jon Michnovicz, MD, PhD, president of the Foundation for Preventive Oncology in New York City.

Cruciferous vegetables contain indole-3-carbinol—known to researchers by the nickname I3C. This compound plays a role in regulating hormones, which may be useful in preventing breast cancer. Indole-3-carbinol has been shown to knock down levels of harmful forms of estrogen while increasing more benign forms of the hormone.

In one study, scientists at Johns Hopkins University exposed 145 laboratory animals to high doses of an extremely powerful cancer-causing agent. Of those, 120 were given high levels of protective sulforaphane, which is found in crucifers. Fifty days later, 68% of the unprotected animals had breast tumors, compared with only 26% of those that received the sulforaphane.

The compounds in cruciferous vegetables can also help you deal with cancers of the cervix, colon, prostate, and stomach.

Five a Day
We’ve known for a long time that people who eat the most fruits, vegetables, and other plant foods are less likely to get cancer than those who fill up on other, less wholesome foods. Research suggests that eating five servings of fruits and vegetables each day reduces cancer deaths by 35%. One study in particular found that a diet rich in fruits and vegetables slashes the risk of pancreatic cancer—a particularly deadly kind—in half.

Scientists have discovered the reason why plant foods offer such powerful cancer protection. Certain substances found only in plant foods and known collectively as phytonutrients (phyto is a Greek word meaning “plant”) have the ability to stop cancer.

Eating just one serving of watermelon or pink grapefruit a day, research has shown, can reduce a man’s risk of developing prostate cancer by 82%. Both these fruits are high in a phytonutrient called...
lycopene. In fact, watermelon contains about 40% more lycopene than do fresh tomatoes, the produce most people probably think of when they think of lycopene.

Researchers in the Tufts University Carotenoids Health Laboratory say skipping fruits and veggies is part of the classic profile of people who develop cancers of the head and neck, but that increasing produce intake may actually cut the risk for recurrence of these cancers.

Tomatoes: Cellular Defense

Almost no one reaps more benefits from tomatoes than Italians, who eat them in one form or another virtually every day. While cooked tomatoes with a touch of oil have the highest levels of lycopene, even raw tomatoes offer powerful protection. Researchers in Italy found that people who ate seven or more servings a week of tomatoes a week had a 60% lower chance of developing stomach, colon, or rectal cancers than folks who ate two servings or less.

In one large study of nearly 48,000 men, Harvard researchers found that those who ate at least 10 servings a week of tomatoes, whether raw, cooked, or in sauce, were able to cut their risk of developing prostate cancer by 45%. That sounds like a lot of tomatoes, but spread out over an entire week, it’s probably not much more than you’re getting now. A single serving is only ½ cup of tomato sauce, which is about the amount of sauce on a slice of pizza.

“Lycopene is a very strong antioxidant,” says Meir Stampfer, MD, coauthor of the study and professor of epidemiology and nutrition at the Harvard School of Public Health. “For some reason, lycopene concentrates in the prostate. Men with high levels of lycopene in their blood are at lower risk for prostate cancer.”

More White Knights Against Cancer

Apples, onions, grapefruit

Apples and onions are both high in quercetin. A Hawaiian study looking at the diet history of 582 people who had lung cancer and 582 without the disease found that the people who ate the most apples, onions, and white grapefruit had roughly half the risk of lung cancer than those who ate the least amounts of these foods. In another study, Finnish researchers found that men who consumed more quercetin were 60% less likely to have lung cancer than men with lower quercetin intakes.

Basil Laboratory studies suggest that compounds in basil may help disrupt the dangerous chain of events that can lead to cancer. Basil’s ability to prevent cancerous changes was linked not to one particular compound in the herb but instead to several compounds working together, the researchers speculated. And basil is a rich source of antioxidants. Per 100 g, it has more antioxidant content than dark chocolate, blackberries, strawberries, or blueberries, according to researchers. Of course, a serving size of basil is tiny compared with the amount of berries (or chocolate) that you’d eat in one sitting. But if you love the taste of the herb on your food, at least you know that you’re helping yourself to an extra dose of antioxidants—of great benefit against an environment that has pollution, ultraviolet light, radiation, and car exhaust that vastly increase free-radical production.

Brazil nuts Eating just one Brazil nut a day could help ward off colon cancer. The nuts are high in the trace mineral selenium, and doctors at the University of Arizona found that men with high levels of selenium are six times less likely to develop colon cancer than men with low levels.

Carotenoids Researchers at the National Cancer Institute found that people with the highest intakes of carotenoids, the pigments that give fruits and vegetables their color, were as much as six times less likely to develop...
skin cancer than those with the lowest intakes. Researchers think that beta-carotene plants itself in the skin, where its pigments help deflect sunlight. “There are several other studies now yielding the same results,” says Harinder Garewal, MD, PhD, professor of medicine at the University of Arizona College of Medicine. “These findings are important because they suggest that you can do something to reverse the onset of cancer.” So eat the most carotenoid-rich yellow, orange, and red fruits and vegetables, such as pumpkin, sweet potatoes, watermelon, and sweet red bell peppers.

**Milk** It really does a body good. Researchers reviewed 63 studies and found that high levels of vitamin D cut the risk of colon, ovarian, and breast cancers by up to 50%. They recommend getting 1,000 IU of vitamin D per day, and 1 cup of milk contains about 100 IU.

**Oranges** Laboratory studies have shown that the limonene found in oranges can help block lung and breast cancers, says Bill Widmer, PhD, a research scientist with the Florida Department of Citrus Research Center in Lake Alfred. In a study at Duke University Medical Center, laboratory animals given a diet of 10% limonene showed a 70% reduction in cancerous tumors. Among the tumors that remained, 20% shrank to less than half their former size. “The way that limonene acts on tumor cells or lesions is really interesting and unique,” says Michael Gould, PhD, professor of oncology and medical physics at the University of Wisconsin Medical School. Essentially, the compound gets cancer cells to self-destruct. It assists them in their own suicides.

**Peas** Researchers have found that these little green marvels contain a powerful compound that can help prevent healthy cells from becoming cancerous. They haven’t pinned down exactly how many peas you’d have to consume to get the most benefits, but you can’t go wrong by eating them—along with other bright, green vegetables—as often as possible.

**Potatoes** A potato’s healing abilities start in the peel, which contains an anticarcinogenic compound called chlorogenic acid, says Mary Ellen Camire, PhD, professor in the department of food science and human nutrition at the University of Maine. To take advantage of the potato’s cancer-fighting abilities, you really have to eat the peel, she says.

**Red wine** Drinking a 4-ounce glass of red wine a day may cut a man’s prostate cancer risk in half, according to a study of more than 1,400 men by the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle. Which wine is best? Order a pinot noir from California. Researchers at the University of Mississippi tested 11 red wines and found that pinot noirs from California have the most resveratrol, an antioxidant that can help ward off cancer and even heart attacks.

**Saponin-rich foods** Studies show that people who eat saponin-rich diets have consistently lower rates of breast, prostate, and colon cancers, says A. Venket Rao, PhD, professor of nutrition at the University of Toronto. Saponins are perhaps the most common phytonutrients. They also bind with and flush out cholesterol, stimulate immunity, and help cut the risk of heart disease. You can find saponins in a wide variety of vegetables, herbs, and legumes, including beans, spinach, tomatoes, potatoes, nuts, and oats. The richest sources are soybeans and chickpeas.

**Sea vegetables** For perhaps thousands of years, sea vegetables have been used in Asian cultures to prevent and treat cancer. As is often the case, modern research indicates that there is more than a little scientific evidence supporting these ancient healing methods. “We need more clinical studies, but so far, there have been some interesting population and animal studies showing that sea vegetables can prevent tumors,” says Alfred A. Bushway, PhD, professor of food science at the University of Maine. He believes that sea vegetables may be partially responsible for the lower cancer rates in countries such as Japan, where sea vegetables are as ubiquitous as our potato. Two types of leafy sea veggies—kelp and dulse—have been reported to reduce the risk of intestinal or mammary cancers in animal studies.

**Tangerine** What makes tangerines really exciting to researchers are two compounds, tangeretin and nobiletin, which appear to be extremely potent against certain types of breast cancer. In Japan, researchers at the Tokyo College of Pharmacy found that tangeretin could inhibit the growth of leukemia cells, essentially by causing them to program their own deaths. Better yet, the compound wasn’t toxic to healthy cells, which is an important goal in any cancer treatment.
Celiac Disease

Celiac disease is a lifelong autoimmune disorder that is caused by an immunologically toxic reaction to eating gluten, a protein found in wheat, barley, oats, and rye. Dealing with celiac disease is deceptively simple. “Eliminate gluten from your diet, and you get better,” says Frederick F. Paustian, MD, of the University of Nebraska Medical Center. The problem is that what is making you sick—gluten—is found in products in practically every aisle in the supermarket. You’ll need to read labels carefully to keep gluten off your plate. For example, there may be a wheat-derived thickening agent in ice cream that is a source of gluten, says Paustian. Gluten is found in many other processed foods as well, among them yogurt with fruit, ketchup, lunchmeat, cheese spreads, salad dressings, and canned soups. For safe items, look for “wheat allergen” and “gluten-free” on food labels. Also, you can buy many whole grains and flours that don’t contain gluten: arrowroot, bean, corn, lentil, milo, pea, potato, rice, soy, tapioca.

Another step to take is working with your doctor to correct any nutritional deficiencies. Celiac disease makes it difficult to absorb fats, so you may be deficient in fatsoluble vitamins such as A, D, E, and K. You may have low levels of iron, too. Deficiencies in calcium and magnesium are also common, says Paustian. So it’s important to eat calcium-rich foods such as yogurt, as well as plenty of magnesium-rich foods, such as potatoes, avocados, and beans.

Cholesterol Control

Elevated cholesterol puts you at higher risk for heart disease, but it’s a risk that you can control. In fact, for each 1% that you lower your total cholesterol, you lower your risk of having a heart attack by 2%. Eating right is the number one way to reduce the amount of cholesterol in your blood.

Staying Well with Gel
Pectin dissolves into a gel that traps fat and cholesterol and then transports them out of the body in the stool. In addition, because pectin isn’t digested, bacteria in the intestine gobble it up. In the process, they release chemicals that travel to the liver, interrupting the production of cholesterol, says cardiologist Michael H. Davidson, MD, executive medical director of Radiant Research in Chicago.

Research has shown that people who get about 6 g of pectin a day—approximately the amount in 3 cups of grapefruit sections—can lower their cholesterol by at least 5%.

Going Low Fat
You don’t have to go on an extremely low-fat diet to get the benefits, however. Even reducing the amount of fat in your diet just a little bit can lead to a reduction in cholesterol levels, says Judy Dodd,
Help from Fiber
Whole grains, beans, and fresh fruits are filled with soluble fiber, a substance that forms a gummy gel in the digestive tract, which helps lower cholesterol.

Data from 13 studies found that the fiber from two servings of oats a day helped lower cholesterol an additional 2 to 3% more than modifying fat did. Soluble fiber isn’t the only thing doing the trapping. Oats also contain compounds called saponins, which in preliminary animal studies appear to bind to cholesterol and usher it out of the body. Saponins also glom onto bile acids. This is good because high levels of bile acids can cause cholesterol levels to rise.

It doesn’t take a loaf of oats to lower cholesterol. Having about 1/4 cup of dry oat bran (which cooks up to about 1 cup) a day can help lower total cholesterol by up to 5%.

Flaxseed, another fiber-rich food, appears to lower levels of dangerous LDL cholesterol, the kind that contributes to heart disease. Three small studies showed that people who added 38 to 50 g per day of flaxseed to their diets for 4 to 6 weeks had an 8 to 14% reduction in their LDL cholesterol levels.

More Cholesterol-Busting Foods

Try magic mushrooms
Researchers from Slovakia have found that by feeding mice 5% of their diets in dried mushrooms, particularly oyster mushrooms, they could reduce blood cholesterol by 45%, even when the mice were given high-cholesterol foods. Researchers can’t say how many mushrooms people have to eat to get the same effect. But experts agree that adding a couple of these large, meaty morsels to your plate each day certainly can’t hurt.

Grab some beans
The good news is that beans can lower cholesterol in just about anyone—and the higher your cholesterol, the better they work. In a study at the University of Kentucky, 20 men with high cholesterol were given about 1/4 cup of pinto and navy beans a day. Total cholesterol dropped an average of 19% in 3 weeks, possibly reducing the men’s heart attack risk by almost 40%. Even more remarkable, the dangerous LDL cholesterol plunged by 24%.

Drink wine
A study conducted in Boston found that averaging five glasses of wine a week cut the risk of dangerously low HDL levels by a whopping 78%. It’s important to keep in mind that while this amount of wine may improve your HDL cholesterol, drinking more heavily can raise blood pressure (another risk factor for heart disease) and have other damaging effects on your health. So be judicious.

Switch to olive oil
The American Heart Association recommends olive oil for your food preparation. It has no more than 2 g of saturated fat per tablespoon, and it lowers LDL cholesterol while leaving the beneficial HDL cholesterol alone.

Sprinkle cinnamon
Just 1/2 teaspoon of cinnamon each day sprinkled on your toast or oatmeal or in your morning coffee could cut your total cholesterol by 12 to 30% while it boosts your body’s ability to store blood sugar, reports researcher Richard A. Anderson, PhD, a research chemist with the USDA Human Nutrition Research Center in Beltsville, Maryland.

Colds and Flu

Since the beginning of time, people have been catching colds, and trying—without success—to come up with a cure for them. Antibiotic drugs that stop bacteria in their tracks can’t even put a dent in the 200-plus cold-causing viruses. Fortunately, you can get a flu shot. It’s effective in 70 to 90% of healthy people under 65 as long as the match between the vaccine and the circulating virus is close.

In the meantime, one of the best strategies against colds and flu is to eat all the immunity-boosting foods you can find.

Load up on yogurt
Researchers in Sweden gave 262 people either a supplement containing a healthy bacteria (Lactobacillus bulgaricus) or a real yogurt with added probiotics. They found a 30% reduction in colds among those who got the yogurt.

Eat Up
Asparagus
Avocado
Chamomile tea
Chicken soup
Garlic
Hot red pepper
Red wine
Tea
Vitamin C-rich foods: acerola, broccoli, cranberry juice, grapefruit, oranges,

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Constipation

Simply getting more fiber and fluids in your diet can often put an end to constipation. Here’s how.

Fill up with fiber Both insoluble and soluble fiber, found primarily in legumes, oats, and many fruits, can help keep the intestine working smoothly. Unlike vitamins and minerals, fiber isn’t absorbed by the digestive tract. Instead, it spends a long time in the intestine, absorbing large amounts of fluid. And that’s precisely its constipation-fighting (and weight loss) secret.

Constipation is common because most Americans simply don’t get enough fiber. On average, we only get about 11 g daily, a lot less than the DV (women, 24 g; men, 30 g), says Pat Harper, RD, a dietitian based in Pittsburgh. Bonus: Fiber gives your heart a boost by lowering your cholesterol. A 1-cup serving of Wheaties contains 3 g of fiber, and 1 cup of Kellogg’s Raisin Bran, 8 g; ½ cup of cooked kidney beans has 3 g of fiber, and an apple also has about 3 g.

Start easy Adding fiber to your diet can cause cramping and gas. Add it gradually over a period of several months, and you probably won’t have any discomfort, according to Marie Borum, MD, MPH, of George Washington University Medical Center in Washington, DC.

Drink water Quaff six to eight full glasses a day, or make up the difference with soup or juice. Beverages containing alcohol or caffeine, however, really shouldn’t count toward your daily fluid total because they’re diuretics, meaning that they remove more fluids from your body than they put in. If you’re a morning coffee drinker, your digestive tract may wake up with a cup of joe; keep it to no more than 5 cups a day.

Hold the cheese Dairy products contain an insoluble protein called casein, which slows digestion and worsens constipation.

Bee clever Honey contains large amounts of fructose, a sugar that sometimes arrives in the large intestine undigested. When bacteria in the intestine begin the process of fermentation, water is drawn into the bowel, which acts as a laxative, explains Marvin Schuster, MD, founder of the Marvin M. Schuster Digestive and Motility Disorders Center at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center. Honey is higher in fructose than just about any other food, he adds.
**Depression**

**Eat Up**

Canola oil
Carb-rich foods: baked potato, raisins, whole wheat pasta
Chocolate (in small amounts)
Cold-water fish (p. 74)
Flaxseed oil

**Steer Clear**

Steady diet of sugar
Caffeine: chocolate, coffee, tea, cola

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Studies have shown that for some individuals, diet can cause depression, according to Larry Christensen, PhD, chairman of the department of psychology at the University of South Alabama and an expert on the effects of sugar and caffeine on mood.

**Fish for a better mood**

Tuna and other oily, cold-water fish are the best sources of omega-3 fatty acids, which studies show are linked to lower rates of depression. Experts suggest getting two servings a week of fish high in omega-3s (see Go Fish, p. 74, for suggestions).

**Eat plenty of carbs**

Diets high in carb-rich foods have been shown to increase brain concentrations of the amino acid tryptophan, which is converted in the body to mood-boosting serotonin. This may explain why many people find that comfort foods high in carbohydrates can help ease feelings of depression, anxiety, and fatigue. For others, not eating carbohydrates may leave them grouchy and depressed. It may be that carbohydrate cravings are the body’s attempt to counteract low serotonin levels. Carbohydrate-cravers will feel energized by a high-carb meal, while others will just get sleepy after eating.

**Cut back on sugar and caffeine**

Experts aren’t sure why sugar gives some people the blues, but it may be related to the amount you consume. While indulging in an occasional candy bar or doughnut can trigger a “sugar buzz” that temporarily boosts your spirits, a steady diet of sugar seems to be linked with depression.

**Diabetes and Prediabetes**

In the not-too-recent past, if you were diagnosed with diabetes, your doctor would hand you the same diet that’s higher in carbohydrates, particularly the complex kind, than was formerly believed. Complex carbs, called starches, include foods such as rice, beans, potatoes, and pasta. While your doctor, dietitian, or nutritionist will determine your personal need for carbohydrates, most people should be getting told just the opposite. In fact, it’s not unusual these days for two people with diabetes, even if they are the same age, same weight, and in the same overall condition, to have totally different diets for controlling it.

Yet one aspect of diabetes has stayed the same: the importance of diet in avoiding or controlling the disease. What you eat—and in some cases, what you don’t eat—is at the heart of any treatment plan. Along with maintaining a healthy weight and getting regular exercise, eating right helps keep blood sugar and fats at steady levels, which is the key to keeping problems under control—or stopping high blood sugar (prediabetes) from becoming diabetes.

**Healing Fiber**

Research suggests that a high-fiber diet can play a powerful role in controlling blood sugar, says James W. Anderson, MD, professor of internal medicine in the department of endocrinology and molecular medicine at the University of Kentucky. In studies conducted by Anderson, people with type 2 diabetes (T2D) who ate a high-fiber (and high-carbohydrate) diet were able to improve their blood sugar control by an average of 95%. People with type 1 diabetes (T1D) on the same diet showed a 30% improvement.

Research also shows that insoluble fiber may play a role in diabetes prevention, as well. In a study conducted at Harvard University, averaging 10 g of cereal fiber each day (from foods such as whole grain breads, rice, and pasta) lowered the risk of T2D by 36%.

Many fiber-filled fruits are also loaded with pectin. Pectin helps lower insulin resistance, which lowers sugar levels in the blood, thus reducing your body’s need to produce extra insulin. Less sugar and less insulin cut your risk for diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

You don’t have to be fanatical about counting grams of fiber. You can easily get enough by eating 3 to 5 servings of vegetables, 2 to 4 servings of fruits, and 6 to 11 servings of breads, cereals, pasta, and rice a day.

**More Sugar-Busting Strategies**

**Indulge in comfort foods**

Most people with diabetes should eat a diet that’s higher in carbohydrates, particularly the complex kind, than was formerly believed. Complex carbs, called starches, include foods such as rice, beans, potatoes, and pasta. While your doctor, dietitian, or nutritionist will determine your personal need for carbohydrates, most people should be getting:

- potato, rice
- Insoluble fiber: dark leafy greens, fruit skins, green beans, nuts, root vegetable skins, seeds, whole grains
- Low-fat dairy foods
- Magnesium-rich foods: halibut (baked), long-grain brown rice, spinach
- Vitamin C-rich foods: cantaloupe, grapefruit, kiwi fruit, oranges, red bell peppers, strawberries, tomato
- Vitamin E-rich foods: corn, soybean, and sunflower oils (in moderation); wheat germ
- Whole grain

*Check with your doctor.

**Steer Clear**

Saturated fats: full-fat dairy products, red meat, other foods

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Diverticulosis

When the colon has to strain to do its job, it can stretch out of shape, causing small pouches to form in the muscular wall. This condition is called diverticulosis, and about 10% of Americans over age 40 and about half of people over age 60 have it. Amazingly, most of them don’t even know they have diverticulosis because it doesn’t always cause discomfort or symptoms. At other times, it can lead to cramping, infection, and other problems. The good news is that the condition is almost entirely preventable—if you eat the right foods.

**Colon’s Best Friends**

Our ancestors didn’t know it, but the fruits, vegetables, legumes, and whole grains that they ate every day were protecting them from diverticulosis. It’s really that simple.

**Eat high-fiber foods**

These are the secret to keeping the colon healthy, says Marvin M. Schuster, MD, founder of the Marvin M. Schuster Digestive and Motility Disorders Center at Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center. And although any fiber is good fiber, the men who got most of their fiber from fruits and vegetables got the best results. Eating several servings a day of fruits, beans, vegetables, and whole grain cereals and breads will provide all the fiber your insides need to stay healthy.

**Skip synthetic fiber**

“To prevent diverticulosis, man-made fiber, such as fiber bars or drinks, are not the answer. We are meant to digest meats, nuts, fruits, and vegetables,” says DicQie Fuller, PhD, DSc, scientific advisor for Z-Health Corporation in Chicago. “Instead, eat at least five servings a day of raw fruits and vegetables for their natural fiber.”

**Embrace aqua**

Drink at least eight glasses of water a day, which will help fiber move smoothly through your system.

Fatigue

Some foods make us sleepy and droopy, while others give us energy to burn. Making even small changes in your diet, experts say, can have a substantial effect on your energy levels.

**Combine protein with carbs**

“Make sure to eat some protein along with carbohydrates at each meal or snack,” says Molly Kimball, RD, a sports and lifestyle nutritionist at the Ochner Health System’s Elmwood Fitness Center in New Orleans. “For instance, instead of having whole wheat toast with jelly or fruit with juice for breakfast, have whole wheat toast with peanut butter or fruit with cottage cheese.”

**Have a protein snack**

You don’t have to down huge amounts of protein to get the energizing effects. Eating just 3 to 4 ounces of a protein-rich food, such as broiled chicken breast or a hard-boiled egg, “feeds” your brain enough.

**Watch the fats**

Even though protein-rich foods can help boost energy, the fats that often come with them can drag you down. Digesting fats diverts blood from the brain, which can make you feel sluggish. So don’t overload a turkey sandwich with high-fat cheese and mayonnaise; dress it with mustard, lettuce, and tomatoes instead.

**Consider iron essential**

You need iron for energy, and even a small deficiency can leave you weary. Women are especially prone to shortages—in fact, 39%...
Food Allergies

Even though there's no cure for food allergies, you can do plenty to prevent attacks.

Read labels carefully You can't assume that a product doesn't contain the offending ingredient.

Take a crash course in food vocabulary if all food labels used everyday language, such as “milk,” for example, or “wheat,” avoiding certain foods would be easy. But in the complex world of food processing, and with the complex names given to processed foods, it's not always easy to tell what you're getting. Ask your doctor for a complete list of the products and ingredients—and all their odd names—that you'll need to avoid.

Expert Input

“My son has a peanut allergy. I found a study done in Spain that said the probiotic lactobacillus has been shown to decrease allergy symptoms,” says Patricia David, MD, MSPH, president of Healthy U in Columbus, Ohio. “So I started giving him some foods containing probiotics. When I took him to the allergist a year later, he no longer had a life-threatening anaphylactic reaction—now he only gets a rash if he’s exposed to peanuts,” she says. “I am not advocating that everyone do this, especially with an allergy as serious as a peanut allergy, but it certainly shows that probiotics can help with food allergies. If you keep the good bacteria in your gut in full force, they may help keep milder allergic reactions at bay.”

David recommends getting probiotics from food sources, such as yogurt, buttermilk, and soy milk (if it’s not an allergy trigger for you). Look for products containing lactobacillus or bifidobacteria.

Gallstones

Even though your body needs some cholesterol, this thick, gummy substance has earned a reputation for being nothing but trouble. In large amounts, cholesterol contributes to heart disease, high blood pressure, and stroke and also plays a role in the formation of gallstones. The more you can do to avoid these painful little nuggets, the better. The suggestions here will get you started.

Cut cholesterol and fat When you get too much fat and cholesterol in your diet, gallstones tend to form, says Henry A. Pitt, MD, professor of surgery and director of the Hepatobiliary Surgery Fellowship at Johns Hopkins Hospital. So it makes sense that the best advice for people who are prone to stones is to eat less red meat and whole-fat dairy foods and less of anything else that contains large amounts of fat and cholesterol, says Pitt.

Don't stop at the drive-through Foods that come in packages, such as processed foods and fast foods, contain the bad fats and oils that contribute to gallstones, says Kaayla Daniel, PhD, a board-certified clinical nutritionist in Santa Fe. “The average American diet contains a lot of partially hydrogenated oils and vegetable oils (aka trans fats), and these fats cause bile to become thick and congested, which leads to gallstones,” she says.

Gas

Gas, which is produced when food is broken down in the digestive tract, is a normal part of digestion. Some foods, of course, produce more gas than others. Beans, for example, produce so much excess air because they aren’t entirely broken down during digestion. This gas has to go somewhere—and out it goes, about 14 times a day.

Fight back “Add a pinch of baking soda to a glass of water and drink it down,” suggests Janet Maccaro, PhD, ND, a holistic nutritionist in Ormond Beach, Florida, and president of Janet's Balance by Nature Products as well as author of Natural Health Remedies.

Fordo fruit as a dessert “Fruit after a meal promotes gas because it
**Gout**

Unfortunately, there's no cure for gout, a form of arthritis in which uric acid builds up in the joints, usually starting with the big toe. Drugs can keep it under control, but people with the condition have other weapons at their disposal, too. Slimming down, eating right, cutting back on alcohol, and drinking plenty of water all help lower uric acid levels and decrease the risk of gout attacks, says Doyt Conn, MD, professor of medicine and director of the division of rheumatology at Emory University in Atlanta. Also see your doc: Gout attacks often grow more frequent and more severe when the problem isn't treated.

**Liquid Prevention**

If you suffer from gout, keep a drinking glass handy.

**Drink milk** A study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* pointed the finger at meat and seafood but also showed that subjects who ate the most dairy products—particularly, low-fat ones—had a reduced incidence of gout. The subjects who consumed 2 cups or more of fat-free milk, low-fat milk, or low-fat yogurt a day had half the rate of gout than those who ate hardly any dairy. So to prevent gout, aim for the same amount.

**Add water** Both soda and fruit juices can help, but water is really the best choice, because it passes through the body quickly without adding unnecessary sugars. Drink at least 10 to 12 glasses of water a day.

**A Folklore Cure That Works?**

Folklore is full of stories about people who relieved gout pain by eating cherries or drinking cherry juice daily.

In the 1950s, a Texan named Ludwig W. Blau, PhD, who was crippled by a gouty big toe and forced to use a wheelchair, reported in a Texas medical journal that a diet including six cherries a day soon had him up and walking. He noted that his physician tried the cherry diet on 12 patients and had equally good results. Do cherries work?

While the Arthritis Foundation still says that there's no absolute evidence to suggest that cherries really can ease the ache of this form of arthritis or any other, many gout sufferers swear by them.

Several studies—including two at the University of California, Davis—have found that natural compounds in cherries may reduce the painful inflammation of arthritis. And a survey by *Prevention* found that 67% of readers who tried cherries for gout had good results.

Steve Schumacher, a kinesiologist in Louisville, enthusiastically recommends them. He advises people with gout to quit eating red meats and organ meats and to drink two to three glasses daily of black cherry juice diluted with an equal amount of water. "Those who have followed this diet faithfully have all gotten results, some within 48 to 72 hours, and some within a week, depending on the severity," Schumacher says.

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**Hay Fever**

While the usual treatment for hay fever is to stay inside and take antihistamines, some people with this allergy don't want to spend the spring indoors. Now there's some evidence that the foods you eat could make you feel even worse. So instead of shutting all the windows, take a look in your kitchen.

**Cook up a storm** Heating the offending foods often will eliminate their allergy-causing potential. But certain fruits, such as peaches and bananas, are not exactly at their tastiest after being sautéed. In this case, there's no real solution, except the obvious one, which is a bummer if you're a fruit lover: You may have to give up the fruits and vegetables that are causing your symptoms to flare up.

**Shop around** Different kinds of honey contain different kinds of pollen. By switching brands a few times, you'll eventually find a honey brand that doesn't make you sneeze.

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**Eat Up**

- Citrus fruit
- Onion
- Pineapple
- Strawberries
- Green tea

**Steer Clear**

- For ragweed allergy: apple, banana, cantaloupe, honey, potato, watermelon, wine
- For tree and grass pollen allergy: apple, carrot, cherries, honey, peach, potato, red wine
Headache and Migraine

The two main types of headaches—tension and vascular, which includes migraine—can be caused by almost anything, including stress, fluctuating hormone levels, or even changes in the weather. But substances found in foods—natural compounds as well as chemicals added during processing—are frequently to blame, says Melvin Werbach, MD, assistant clinical professor of psychiatry at UCLA and author of Healing through Nutrition and Nutritional Influences on Illness.

If you’re prone to headaches, it might be a good idea to eat more foods that are high in fiber and complex carbohydrates, such as fresh vegetables, whole grains, and dried beans and other legumes. But there are some people for whom it can actually make headaches worse. If you have low blood sugar, or hypoglycemia, for example, you may find that you do better if you consume fewer carbohydrates.

If you’ve noticed that your headaches often occur after you’ve eaten a lot of carbohydrates, try eating slightly more protein in the form of lean meats, eggs, or low-fat cheese.

A huge culprit in migraine is tyramine. Nitrites are another common cause of headache pain, causing blood vessels in the head and body to dilate painfully. And monosodium glutamate (MSG), a preservative and flavor enhancer used in a variety of foods, can be a problem. It’s also a common additive in Chinese cooking.

Vitamins and Minerals for Relief

Magnesium Ready-to-eat breakfast cereals are a good source of magnesium; some brands contain more than 100 mg, or 30% of the DV, in a 1-ounce serving. Nuts, seeds, and dark green leafy vegetables are also rich in magnesium. Because nuts are loaded with fat, you’ll want to eat them in moderation (no more than a handful a day) and get most of your magnesium elsewhere.

Calcium One study found that women who consumed 200 mg of calcium a day (20% of the DV) had fewer headaches than women who consumed less. Dairy foods are the best sources of calcium. Topping the list is milk, with 1 cup of fat-free milk containing 302 mg, or about 30% of the DV. Other good sources are in the “Eat Up” list.

Iron When you don’t get enough iron in your diet, your blood vessels dilate to admit more blood, says Alan M. Rapoport, MD, cofounder and director of the New England Center for Headache in Stamford, Connecticut, and assistant clinical professor of neurology at Yale University School of Medicine. “This dilation compresses the nerves in the walls of the vessels, causing head pain,” he explains. See Best Food Sources of Iron on p. 67.

Benefits of B6 The brain uses vitamin B6 to increase serotonin levels, explains Rapoport, “so a good intake of B6 might help relieve migraines, even if you’re not deficient in it.” The DV for vitamin B6 is 1.3 mg (and 1.5 mg after age 50). One medium potato or one banana contains 0.7 mg of B6. A 3-ounce serving of baked or broiled swordfish has 0.3 mg. Don’t take B6 supplements unless they’re prescribed by a doctor.

Help from the Kitchen

Enjoy ginger When you feel a migraine coming on, try taking ginger, which stimulates circulation. Danish researchers suggest 1⁄2 teaspoon of powdered ginger. Charles Lo, MD, a doctor of Chinese medicine in private practice in Chicago, advises grating fresh ginger or pushing it through a garlic press; these methods release more of the potent juices than does slicing or chopping. Or you can make a spicy ginger

Common Triggers

Foods containing MSG: lunchmeat, canned and dry soups, frozen dinners
Foods containing nitrates: cured meats such as bologna, hot dogs, canned meats
Foods containing tyramine: aged dairy products, bananas, beans, beer, chocolate, nuts

Drink more green tea In laboratory tests, Japanese researchers found that the abundant and active antioxidant compound in green tea, epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG), blocks the biochemical process involved in producing an allergic response. Green tea may be useful against a wide range of sneeze-starting allergens, including pollen, pet dander, and dust. Go for two to three mugs a day.

Try a fruity Rx “Pineapple contains bromelain, which helps block the inflammation of hay fever,” says Janet Maccaro, PhD, ND, a holistic nutritionist in Ormond Beach, Florida, and president of Janet’s Balance by Nature products as well as author of Natural Health Remedies. So when hay fever flares up, buy some fresh pineapple and munch on it for some relief, she says.

Eat Up

Calcium-rich foods: broccoli, ice milk, low-fat fruit yogurt, milk, Swiss chard Coffee Complex carbs high in fiber: dried legumes, fresh vegetables, whole grains Feverfew Iron-rich foods (p. 67) Magnesium-rich foods: dark leafy greens, nuts, ready-to-eat breakfast cereals, seeds Ginger

*No more than 10 a day
**For some, makes headaches worse

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Heartburn

Before you rush to the pharmacy for an antacid, make a pit stop in your kitchen. “Modifying the diet remains one of the first lines of treatment for people with heartburn,” says Suzanne Rose, MD, professor of medical education and gastroenterology at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York City.

Putting Out the Fire

Try an all-natural antacid

Ginger helps strengthen the holding power of the lower esophageal sphincter, which can help keep acid where it belongs. If you don’t like the spiciness of fresh ginger, make a ginger tea by adding ½ to 1 teaspoon of freshly grated ginger (or ¼ to ½ teaspoon of powdered ginger) to a cup of hot water. Let it steep for 10 minutes, strain, and enjoy.

Treat yourself to some TLC If you’re suffering from a bout of heartburn, be careful about eating spicy foods until your esophagus has a chance to heal, says Rose. Many people don’t think twice about dousing tender esophageal tissues with hot peppers or a swig of orange juice. You don’t have to give up your favorite foods entirely. Just avoid them for a few days until your heartburn is feeling better.

Heart Disease

After almost 50 years of investigating what makes heart disease our worst public health enemy, scientists have come up with some pretty simple and straightforward answers. Here are some of the best foods for preventing heart disease.

Fiber Fortification

Your grandmother called it roughage. Today, we call it fiber. But whatever it’s called, it’s an important part of any heart protection plan. Fiber, especially the soluble kind found in beans, fruits, and whole grains, binds with cholesterol in the body and helps remove it along with the waste, says Diane Grabowski-Nepa, RD, a dietitian and nutritional counselor at the Pritikin Longevity Center in Santa Monica.

Results from the Nurses’ Health Study, which looked at the lifestyle factors of 68,782 women for 10 years, showed that women who consumed an average of 22.9 g of fiber a day had a 23% lower risk of heart disease than women who consumed less than 12 g a day. Overall, fruits and vegetables are the best sources of fiber.

Research has shown that people who get the most soluble fiber in their diets are at the least risk for heart disease. In one study, researchers at Tulane University studied the relationship between total dietary fiber intake and soluble fiber intake on the risk of cardiovascular disease in 9,776 adults. After 19 years, those who ate an average of 20.7 g of fiber a day had significantly fewer cardiovascular disease events than the people who got an average of 5.9 g a day.

That risk was even lower in men with the highest intake of soluble fiber, indicating that a higher intake of dietary fiber, particularly soluble fiber, reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease.

24-Carat Carotenoids

Yellow, orange, and red vegetables are more than beautifully colored food; they contain generous amounts of carotenoids. So do deep green leafy vegetables such as spinach and kale.

Why is this important? A study of almost 1,900 men found that men who had the most carotenoids in their blood—not just beta-carotene
but also such phytonutrients as lutein and zeaxanthin—had 72% fewer heart attacks than those with the lowest levels.

**Favorable Flavonoids**
Flavonoids are part of a large—and amazing—phytochemical family. Studies suggest that flavonoids may help lower cholesterol, prevent cholesterol from sticking to artery walls, and keep blood platelets from forming dangerous clots in the bloodstream, thus helping to prevent stroke. Here’s how to get more in your diet.

**Go for grapes** Among the most powerful ingredients in purple grape juice are flavonoids—some of the same ones found in red wine. A study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* showed that purple grape juice has the power to reduce LDL cholesterol and triglycerides—which helps lower risk for heart disease. Keeping LDL cholesterol in check is a good start against heart disease. Keeping LDL cholesterol and triglycerides in check is a good start against heart disease. But you also need to keep the platelets, components in blood that cause it to clot, from sticking together unnecessarily. The flavonoids in purple grape juice do that, too.

**Drink tea** In a Dutch study of 800 men, researchers found that those who consumed the most flavonoids had a 58% lower risk of dying from heart disease than those who had the least. When the results were further analyzed, it was revealed that the healthiest men were those getting more than half their flavonoids from black tea, with onions and apples contributing most of the rest. In another large study, Dutch researchers looked at the diets of 550 men ages 50 to 69. As in the heart study, the men who had the highest flavonoid levels—who drank almost 5 cups of black tea a day or more—were 69% less likely to have a stroke than the men who drank less than 3 cups of black tea a day.

**Toss Some Nuts**
One great thing about nuts is that they contain compounds that help keep the arteries open and blood flowing smoothly.

It was quite by accident that researchers at Loma Linda University discovered that eating nuts seems to protect against heart disease. They asked 26,000 members of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, an extremely health-conscious bunch, to indicate the frequency with which they ate 65 food items. When researchers examined the diets and disease rates of people in seven different countries, they found that while heart disease accounted for 46% of deaths of middle-aged men in America, only 4% of men in Crete—an island in the Mediterranean—had similar problems. In fact, the death rate from all causes in Crete during this 15-year study was lower than that of the other countries. See The Mediterranean Diet (p. 76) to learn this heart-healthy way of eating.

**Adopt a low-fat food plan**
In one study, researchers put people on a very low-fat diet, with only 5% of total calories coming from fat. After 11 days, cholesterol levels had dropped an average of 11%, and blood pressure went down an average of 6%. This 11% decrease in cholesterol may have reduced their chances of dying from heart attacks by almost 33%.

**More Heart-Healthy Moves**

**Eat like a Greek** When researchers examined the diets of 550 men ages 50 to 69, they discovered that eating nuts seems to protect against heart disease. The healthiest men were those getting more than half their flavonoids from black tea, with onions and apples contributing most of the rest. In another large study, Dutch researchers looked at the diets of 550 men ages 50 to 69. As in the heart study, the men who had the highest flavonoid levels—who drank almost 5 cups of black tea a day or more—were 69% less likely to have a stroke than the men who drank less than 3 cups of black tea a day.

**W**hen hemorrhoids swell, they press against tender nerves, which is why they’re often so painful. Eating certain foods can make the pain even worse. So the next time hemorrhoids occur—or if you’re ready for an ounce of prevention—here’s what to do.

**Say nada to java** Drinking coffee causes the intestines to contract, which can irritate an already tender hemorrhoid. Also, coffee is a diuretic, meaning it causes the body to lose valuable water—and you need more, not less, water when hemorrhoids flare.

**Take a break from alcohol**
Like coffee, alcohol is a diuretic and can cause constipation. When you have hemorrhoids, abstain from drinking alcohol until they go away.

**Eat like a bird** To strengthen

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**Food for What Ails You**

**Spicy foods**

**Coffee**

**Alcoholic beverages**

**Steer Clear**

**Eat Up**

Anthocyanin-rich berries: blackberries, blueberries, cherries
Dried fruits
Water

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**Herpes**

Contrainary to the popular belief that herpes appears only on the mouth and genitals, the virus can cause sores anywhere on the body, so the last thing you want is to be infected with it. But if you already have herpes, there is some evidence suggesting that eating more of some types of foods and less of others can help. Here are some foods that will make the virus weaker, strengthen your immune system, or help heal the sores.

**Eat Up**
- Garlic
- Lysine-rich foods: baked beans, cheese, egg, milk, pork
- Thyme
- Vitamin C–rich foods: broccoli, guava, orange juice, peach, bell pepper

**Steer Clear**
- Arginine-rich foods: beer, chocolate, nuts, peas

Knock it back with lysine You wouldn’t think that an egg or a bowl of baked beans would have much stopping power against the herpes virus. But these foods contain large amounts of lysine, an amino acid that can help prevent the virus from thriving. Get 1,000 to 2,000 mg of lysine a day. Just 1½ ounces of provolone cheese has 1,110 mg. Two eggs provide 900 mg, and 1 cup of baked beans has 960 mg. Pork is a lysine powerhouse, with one broiled, center-cut loin chop providing almost 2,000 mg.

Watch your arginine/lysine ratio “Arginine is an amino acid that herpes relies on for building its protein coating,” says Mark McCune, MD, a dermatologist at Kansas City Laser and Skin Surgery Center in Overland Park, Kansas. “If your diet is very high in arginine, this might help the virus grow aggressively.” You don’t have to give up foods with arginine entirely. What you should do, however, is balance them by eating other foods that are high in lysine.

Do magic with milk Doctors aren’t sure why it works, but applying a milk compress to a cold sore may help it heal more quickly. Just dip a washcloth or handkerchief in milk, apply it to the sore for 5 seconds, then remove it for another 5. Continue the process for 5 minutes, and repeat it every 3 to 4 hours, rinsing your skin between treatments.

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**Immune System Weakness**

Every minute of every day, your body keeps microscopic invaders in check. Your immune system can make more than 100 billion types of antibodies to attack harmful microbes. To a large extent, your ability to maintain a healthy immune system depends on what you eat, says Thomas Petro, PhD, associate professor of microbiology and immunology at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. Here’s what you can do.

**Defend yourself** The most powerful protection that you can give your immune system is to eat a well-balanced diet containing a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, seeds, nuts, and seafood. These foods are high in nutrients, some of which are antioxidants, that may help give the immune system an added boost.

**Reduce fat** Studies have shown that people who cut back on fat in their diets have a rapid increase in natural killer cell activity, a sign of immune system strength. In one study, researchers at the University of Massachusetts Medical School put men on low-fat diets for 3 months. For every 1% the men were able to reduce the fat in their diets, the activity of their natural killer cells went up nearly 1%. For most people, getting no more than 30% of calories from fat—and preferably getting between 20 and 25%—is probably ideal.

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**Infertility**

While many physical problems can lead to infertility, just changing the menu may put some couples on the baby track. Research has shown that a man’s sperm may not be up to the job if he doesn’t get enough of a few key nutrients. And for a woman, starting the day with a jolt or ending it with a soother can make it harder to conceive. So, you might want to make a few changes in the kitchen.

**Limit your caffeine** Drinking coffee, tea, cola, or other caffeinated beverages can significantly reduce a woman’s chances of getting pregnant, says John Jarrett, MD, a reproductive endocrinologist in private practice in Indianapolis. And a review done at Boston College found that caffeine

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**Eat Up**
- Beans
- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Low-fat dairy products
- Nuts
- Seafood
- Seeds
- Whole grains

**Steer Clear**
- Full-fat dairy products
- Snack foods
- Processed foods in cans, packets, boxes (except canned fruits, beans, vegetables)
- Red meat

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Insomnia

The next time you find yourself tossing and turning, get out of bed, put on your slippers, and head for the kitchen. There's good evidence that what you eat before going to bed can help turn out the lights on insomnia.

Nibble on cheese and a cracker For tryptophan—the sleepy-time compound in foods such as turkey, chicken, and milk—to be most effective, it's important to get it in combination with starches. When you eat starches—a bagel, for example—the body releases insulin, which pushes all the amino acids except tryptophan into muscle cells. This leaves tryptophan alone in the bloodstream, so it's first in line to get into the brain.

Be alert for sneaky caffeine You already know that coffee can keep you up at night, but did you know that chocolate can also send your brain into overdrive? A serving of chocolate doesn't have as much caffeine as a cup of coffee or a cola, but it can have the same effect on your sleep, says Michael Bonnet, PhD, a sleep specialist and director of the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Dayton, Ohio. It's not just late-night caffeine that leaves you staring at the ceiling, Bonnet adds, since it takes 6 to 8 hours for the body to eliminate caffeine from your system.

Ditch the booze buzz Alcohol is one of the most common disturbers of sleep. A glass of wine or a drink at bedtime can very quickly put you out, but the alcohol causes a rebound effect and you'll soon wake up.

Kidney Stone

What you eat affects the kinds and amounts of minerals that accumulate in your urine—minerals that, in some people, lead to the formation of stones. The stones that respond best to dietary changes are uric acid and calcium stones. The dietary changes recommended here are given primarily with these in mind.

Drink OJ In a study at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, men with histories of kidney stones were given either three glasses of orange juice a day or a potassium-citrate supplement. The researchers found that the juice was almost as effective as the supplement. “We recommend drinking at least a liter (a little more than 32 ounces) a day if you

Food for What Ails You

Irritable Bowel Syndrome

Eating fiber is key to avoiding IBS flare-ups—and will help relieve both diarrhea and constipation, which are also part of the condition. Samuel Meyers, MD, clinical professor of medicine at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York City, says getting no more than 30% of your total calories from fat will also go a long way toward relieving an irritable bowel.

Just as the right foods can upset an irritable bowel, certain herbs will help keep the problem under control, says Daniel B. Mowrey, PhD, director of the American Phytotherapy Research Laboratory in Salt Lake City and author of Herbal Tonic Therapies. Here’s what he recommends.

Licorice root This sweet herb, which you can use to make tea, is a natural anti-inflammatory that can help relieve irritation in the bowel.

Peppermint In one study, people with IBS who took peppermint capsules were able to stop all or most of their symptoms. Peppermint tea is also effective.

Psyllium The main ingredient in a number of over-the-counter laxatives, psyllium seeds, which are very high in fiber, have been shown to help relieve the pain of IBS as well as the diarrhea and constipation that may accompany it.
Lupus

Eat Up
Foods high in omega-3 fatty acids: canola oil, cold-water fish (p. 74); dark leafy greens, flaxseed
Vitamin C–rich foods: broccoli, cabbage, citrus fruit, kiwi fruit
Vitamin E–rich foods: egg yolks, nuts, whole grains

Steer Clear
Saturated fats: corn and sunflower oils
Oxalate-rich foods: beet greens, black tea, chocolate, peanuts and other nuts, spinach, strawberries, Swiss chard

There's no one-size-fits-all diet for people who suffer from lupus erythematosus, a disease in which the immune system turns against the body, attacking and damaging healthy tissues. But you can pay attention to your symptoms and shape your own diet so that it helps give you the most relief. The Lupus Foundation of America (LFA) recommends keeping track of the foods that seem to aggravate your lupus symptoms so you can avoid eating them.

Compounds That Heal
Flaxseed has been shown to significantly help people whose kidneys have been damaged by lupus. It has an abundance of two compounds that may help: alpha-linolenic acid (an omega-3 fatty acid) and lignans. In one study, researchers at the University of Western Ontario in Canada gave flaxseed to nine people whose kidneys were damaged by lupus. They found that the people who were given ½ cup of raw ground flaxseed a day, which they stirred into juice or sprinkled on breakfast cereal, had better kidney function.

The omega-3 fatty acids in flaxseed (and other foods in the “Eat Up” list) boost the production of anti-inflammatory compounds in the body, according to the LFA.

Foods That Hurt
Alfalfa sprouts These contain an amino acid called L-canavanine, which can stimulate the immune system and make inflammation from lupus worse, cautions the LFA. It recommends that you check food labels because alfalfa may be an ingredient in some foods.

Saturated and polyunsaturated fats A Japanese study of more than 150 women showed that those who ate red meat frequently were nearly 3½ times more likely to develop lupus. It's not only meat or saturated fat that's the problem. Laboratory studies showed that when mice with lupus were given smaller-than-normal amounts of polyunsaturated fats, their symptoms were reduced.

Osteoporosis

When trying to prevent osteoporosis, what you eat is generally more important than what you avoid. However, some foods and beverages can prevent calcium from being absorbed, so it's important to cut back on the worst offenders.

Bone-Building Calcium
The sad thing about osteoporosis is that it's often preventable—if you get enough calcium, says Susan Broy, MD, director of the Osteoporosis Center at the Advocate Medical Group in Chicago. In one study, researchers in the Netherlands found that women who got at least 1,000 mg of calcium a day—about the amount in three glasses of milk—were able to reduce their bone loss by 43%. Yet the average American woman only gets 450 mg of calcium a day—nowhere near the 1,000 to 1,500 mg needed to ward off osteoporosis, says Broy.

Getting enough calcium is especially important for women approaching menopause, when estrogen levels decline. Estrogen helps bones absorb and keep calcium. In many cases, when estrogen levels fall, the bones become weaker. In fact, the highest rate of bone loss occurs in the first 5 to 7 years after menopause.

Milk, cheese, and other dairy foods are among the best sources of calcium—the super bone builders.

How To Get More
Add D Calcium doesn't work alone. In fact, it can't even get into your bones without help from other

Eat Up
Calcium-rich foods: dairy products, dark leafy greens, Fortified orange juice, breakfast cereals
Vitamin D–rich foods: salmon and other fatty fish
Steer Clear
Caffeine drinks: coffee, tea, cola
Salt
Controlling appetite is perhaps the key to successfully losing weight, according to a study at the University of Sydney in Australia. Researchers there identified “high-satisfaction” foods that help keep you feeling full longer. When you do have coffee, it’s a good idea to pour in a bit of milk. Milk essentially blocks the effects of caffeine, preventing it from pulling calcium from your bones.

**Take a supplement** All calcium supplements, whether they’re made from bone meal, oyster shells, or calcium citrate, are effective, says Baran. But the best supplements—as well as the least expensive—are those containing calcium carbonate, which is the same ingredient found in many antacids, he says.

### Satisfaction Guaranteed

#### Foods That Keep You Full Longer

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<th>Food</th>
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<td>Brown rice</td>
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### Overweight

**Eat Up**

- Complex carbs: beans, pasta, potato, rice
- Fiber-rich foods, especially soluble fiber (p. 72)
- High-satisfaction foods (p. 33)
- Leafy greens
- Lean protein-rich foods
- Low-fat foods
- Pectin-rich foods (p. 71)
- Sweet potato
- Water
- Whole grains

Most people trying to lose weight can count calories in their sleep. But calories, while important, are just part of the weight loss equation. Intriguing weight loss research from major universities is revealing that when you pack a reduced-calorie diet with high-satisfaction foods, you can lose weight more easily. The magic foods: fruits, veggies, whole grains, lean protein, and good fats.

The real miracle may be that certain foods can actually help, rather than hinder, your efforts to lose weight. Researchers are finding that what you eat is just as important as how much of it you eat. For example, the body doesn’t process the calories in a high-fat chocolate chip cookie the same way it does the calories in a potato or a plate of carbohydrate-loaded pasta. Also, studies show that while some foods fuel the impulse to eat, others seem to “switch off” the appetite.
Food for What Ails You

The key to losing weight is cutting the number of calories in your diet. And the easiest way to cut calories is to eat less fat, says Judy Dodd, RD, assistant professor in the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh and former president of the American Dietetic Association.

The National Weight Loss Registry reports that its members who have lost weight and kept it off for more than 5 years did so through a low-calorie, low-fat diet. Cutting fat from your diet does more than make you thinner and healthier. Research suggests that a low-fat diet can also increase your general sense of well-being. In a study of more than 550 women, researchers at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle found that when the women cut their daily fat intake in half—from 40 to 20% of total calories—they felt more vigorous, less anxious, and less depressed than they had while eating their former diets.

And in a 2006 study, Canadian researchers looked at the weight loss and cholesterol levels of 30 obese women after they spent 6 months eating a low-fat diet and exercising for at least 40 minutes three times a week. On average, the women lost 15% of their body weight, and their cholesterol fell 9%. Artery-clogging LDL cholesterol fell 8%, on average.

Wash away weight

Many of us think it’s time to eat when, in fact, we’re merely thirsty. Drinking water is a great way to quell hunger pangs. In addition, when you consume water with meals, you’re more likely to take in fewer calories, says Lucia Kaiser, PhD, RD, a cooperative extension specialist at the University of California, Davis.

Water can help in yet another way. When you drink it cold (40°F or cooler), you actually burn calories because your body has to raise the temperature of the water to 98.6°F. In the process, you burn slightly less than 1 calorie per ounce of water. So if you toss back eight glasses of cold water a day, you’ll burn about 62 calories. That adds up to 434 calories a week, says Ellington Darden, PhD, author of A Flat Stomach ASAP.

Filling Fiber

Green beans and fresh-from-the-vine tomatoes; juicy peaches and luxurious raspberries; stick-to-your-ribs whole grains—these types of nutrient-dense foods form the backbone of the most effective healthy-eating plans that control your weight.

Why? They satisfy. Although we often talk about fiber as if it were a single substance, there are actually two main types—soluble and insoluble. Although they act in different ways, they combine their talents in the one area people need them most: losing weight.

Since foods that are high in fiber are very filling, you’ll naturally eat a little less. Plus, when you’re eating more fiber-rich foods, you’ll automatically eat less of other, more fattening foods. Soluble fiber has other benefits, as well. Because it causes nutrients to be absorbed more slowly, it helps you feel more satisfied after eating, so you snack less.

To get the DV (women, 24 g; men, 30 g), look at the Fiber-Rich Foods list (p. 72).

Fat-Blocking Pectin

People who are trying to lose weight are often advised to eat more fruits, legumes, and other pectin-rich foods. There’s a good reason for this. When pectin—a type of dietary fiber—dissolves in the stomach, it gradually expands, taking up more room. At the same time, it slows the absorption of sugars and nutrients into the bloodstream. This helps you feel more satisfied even when you haven’t had a lot to eat.

‘Pectin helps to give you that feeling of fullness, so you don’t need to eat as much,” says researcher Barbara F. Harland, PhD, professor of nutrition at Howard University. “One of the most important things for losing weight and keeping it off is getting more fiber, including pectin.”

Expert Input

Potatoes don’t have to be left out of a low-carb diet. The key is knowing how to cook them. A baked white potato, containing about 1/2 cup of sugar, can be a good option even for a low-carb meal because of its fiber, says Carol Forman Helerstein, PhD, a licensed clinical nutritionist in private practice on Long Island and a consultant for the Zone Diet. The fiber stops the uptake of the sugar. If you mash the potato, you break down its fiber and the benefits decrease. Sweet potatoes or yams are even better choices than potatoes. “I’ll choose a yam or half of a baked white potato instead of mashed potatoes,” says Helerstein.

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More Fat-Busting Strategies

Wash away weight

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Take it cool

Water can help in yet another way. When you drink it cold (40°F or cooler), you actually burn calories because your body has to raise the temperature of the water to 98.6°F. In the process, you burn slightly less than 1 calorie per ounce of water. So if you toss back eight glasses of cold water a day, you’ll burn about 62 calories. That adds up to 434 calories a week, says Ellington Darden, PhD, author of A Flat Stomach ASAP.
Food for What Ails You

Use this sugar solution To quiet your body's clamor for sugar without raiding the cookie jar, eat complex carbohydrates. Because they're absorbed more slowly than the sugars in sweets, they help stabilize your blood sugar. And that, in turn, controls sugar cravings. Beans are rich in complex carbohydrates.

Whittle your waist An even better benefit of eating fewer carbs: a flatter stomach. Insulin causes fat to be stored in the belly, and belly fat is related to heart disease and diabetes. When you eat a diet that controls your insulin levels, you'll find you'll have a slimmer middle, says Carol Forman Helerstein, PhD, a licensed clinical nutritionist in private practice on Long Island and a consultant for the Zone Diet.

Go green Leafy green vegetables deliver more nutrients in fewer calories than virtually any other food. “You get so many important nutrients from leafy green vegetables—magnesium, iron, calcium, folate, vitamin C, and vitamin B₆—plus all the cancer- and heart disease-fighting phytochemicals,” says Michael Liebman, PhD, professor of human nutrition at the University of Wyoming. Of all the foods in this powerhouse family, iceberg is the runt. Far better: beet greens, chicory, dandelion greens, kale, spinach, Swiss chard, and turnip greens.

Try an Asian diet Studies show that many people living in Asian countries are slimmer and have lower cholesterol and lower rates of heart disease and cancer than people in America. The traditional Asian diet has been called the healthiest in the world. It’s surprisingly simple and satisfying. Rice, noodles, breads, and other grains make up the foundation, which is topped with generous portions of bok choy, mushrooms, and other vegetables as well as fruits. The diet also includes beans, seeds, nuts, fish, eggs, and poultry, a few sweets, and occasionally some meat.

Polyps (Intestinal)

While polyps themselves aren’t dangerous, over time they may become cancerous. The good news is that there’s an excellent way to deal with—and prevent—them: fiber.

In a 4-year study at the New York Hospital–Cornell Medical Center in New York City, researchers studied 58 men and women with histories of intestinal polyps. In the study, those given bran cereal containing 22 g of insoluble fiber were more likely to have their polyps shrink or disappear entirely than were those who were given a low-fiber look-alike. The remarkable thing about insoluble fiber, and one of the reasons it’s beneficial to your health, is that it leaves the digestive system in very nearly the same condition in which it went in, which is why doctors once...
believed that “roughage” played little part in good nutrition.

Most foods from plants contain both soluble and insoluble fiber, but they usually have more of one kind than the other. Apples, for example, contain mostly soluble fiber, while grains are higher in the insoluble kind. Soluble and insoluble fiber act in totally different ways once they get inside the body, and as a result, they help protect against different conditions, says Barbara Harland, PhD, RD, professor of nutrition at Howard University in Washington, DC. You shouldn’t worry too much about the kind of fiber you’re getting, however, Harland says. If you eat a lot of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes, you’ll automatically get healing amounts of both kinds.

### Premenstrual Problems

#### Eat Up

- Canola, flaxseed, and olive oils
- Complex carbs: dried beans and other legumes, whole grains
- Fat-free or low-fat dairy foods
- Foods high in omega-3 fatty acids: almonds, cold-water fish (p. 74), flaxseed, walnuts
- Fortified orange juice
- Magnesium- and calcium-rich foods: root vegetables, dark leafy greens

#### Steer Clear

- Butter
- Caffeine: chocolate, coffee, tea, colas
- Corn and safflower oils
- Saturated fats:
- Full-fat dairy

Doctors used to believe PMS was “all in your head.” They don’t think that any more. But they still aren’t sure exactly what causes the array of physical and emotional problems. Many factors are probably involved, including swings in hormones (estrogen and progesterone), blood sugar, and the brain chemical serotonin. Even though there’s still a lot of mystery surrounding this condition, one thing is clear: What you eat can make a big difference in how you feel before your period.

Here are some nutritional strategies for easing the discomfort.

#### Mood-Lifting Combo

Numerous studies have linked the combination of calcium and vitamin D to a lessening of PMS symptoms. And researchers at the University of Massachusetts found evidence that a high intake of the two may not only lessen the severity of PMS symptoms but may even prevent PMS from developing in the first place.

When Elizabeth R. Bertone-Johnson, ScD, and her team compared women who reported developing PMS with those who had no or very mild symptoms over a 10-year period, they concluded that women who consumed about 1,200 mg of calcium and 400 IU of vitamin D daily were 30% less likely to develop the mood swings, bloating, pre-period cramps, and other symptoms of PMS. The calcium-plus-D group took in about four daily servings of fat-free or low-fat milk, fortified orange juice, or another low-fat dairy product such as yogurt.

#### Drink More Milk …

**All the Time**

Calcium works to reduce PMS symptoms in a number of ways, including possibly preventing the muscular contractions that cause cramping. Throughout your cycle, it’s a good idea to begin increasing your consumption of low-fat, calcium-rich foods such as fat-free or low-fat milk and low-fat yogurt, says research psychologist James G. Penland, PhD, who has conducted calcium/PMS studies at the USDA Human Nutrition Research Center in Grand Forks, North Dakota. You don’t need massive amounts to get the benefits: Women in the studies generally took between 1,000 to about 1,340 mg a day, the amount in four servings of low-fat or fat-free milk, yogurt, cheese, or fortified orange juice. (Can’t quite fit that much in? It’s okay to take a calcium supplement.)

#### Calming Carbs

Complex carbohydrates ease premenstrual discomfort by increasing the brain’s level of serotonin, a calming chemical that regulates mood and sleep. In a small study conducted at MIT, women with PMS reported that eating a carb-rich meal lightened their premenstrual depression, tension, and sadness and made them feel calmer and more alert.

Some doctors recommend that women with premenstrual discomfort eat a small amount of pasta, cereal, or bread—all made from whole grains—every 3 hours, which will help keep blood sugar from falling too low. In one study, 54% of women who consumed a starch-based mini meal such as bread, crackers, or cereal every 3 hours had less premenstrual discomfort.

There’s no reason to limit yourself to bread and crackers when you’re trying to get more carbs. Having a bowl of whole grain cereal, such as plain granola or oatmeal, will keep you full while also controlling your sweet tooth. Rice cakes also make a good snack, particularly when topped with a little peanut butter or sugar-free preserves.

Also eat root vegetables, such as carrots, turnips, and parsnips, and dark green leafy vegetables like collard and mustard greens, all of which are rich in magnesium and calcium—nutrients that have been shown to ease premenstrual discomfort.
Vegan for Serious PMS

When 33 women with extreme PMS tried a strict vegan eating plan (no animal products, notably meat, fish, poultry, eggs, and dairy products) for 2 months, bloating and difficulty concentrating (two big PMS problems) decreased. And so did menstrual cramps. “For some women, the change was profound,” notes lead researcher Neil Barnard, MD, president of the Washington, D.C.–based group Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine. “Their pain was gone or dramatically reduced, something they had not experienced for years. If they needed any pain medicine at all, they needed much less than before.”

Barnard suspects that the high-fiber, low-fat plan increases levels of sex-hormone binding globulin—which in turn deactivates excess estrogen careening around in the bloodstream. “Our goal was to smooth out the hormonal roller coaster many of them experience each month,” says Barnard.

More Food Fixes

Banish gluten Wheat contains gluten, a protein that tends to increase premenstrual bloating and weight gain. If that seems to be a problem for you, avoid wheat before your period and instead choose rice, millet, or other grains.

Avoid sugary fruits While most fruits are good for women with PMS, tropical varieties like mangoes, papayas, and pineapple are unusually high in sugar. This means they can aggravate rather than relieve food cravings. As your period approaches, you may want to stick with less sugary fruits such as apples, oranges, or grapefruits.

Psoriasis

Eat Up

Carrot
Folate-rich foods: asparagus, chicory, dark green vegetables, dried beans and peas, fortified cereals, grapefruit and orange juice, organ meats*

Fresh fruits and vegetables

Tomato

*Especially if taking methotrexate

I n people with psoriasis, the body makes far too many skin cells, producing them about five times faster than average, which causes the skin to get thick and scaly. Doctors aren’t sure what causes psoriasis, although it appears that the immune system may damage genetic material that tells skin cells how often to divide.

There’s evidence that eating more produce can help control psoriasis. In a study of more than 680 people, researchers at the University of Milan in Italy found that those who ate the most carrots, tomatoes, fresh fruits, and green vegetables were much less likely to get psoriasis than folks who ate less. In fact, eating just three or more servings of carrots a week reduced the risk of psoriasis by 40%. Those who ate seven or more servings of tomatoes a week reduced their risk by 60%, and those who had two servings a day of fresh fruits reduced their risk by 50%.

Since these foods are all sources of beta-carotene and vitamins C and E, the researchers speculate that it’s the antioxidant and immune-stimulating effects of these foods that may make the difference.

Expert Input

The drug methotrexate inhibits folate, an important B vitamin. If you take that drug for psoriasis, fight back by eating more chicory, asparagus, and other dark green vegetables, dried beans and peas, grapefruit and orange juice, cantaloupe, chicken livers and other organ meats, and fortified cereals.

Stroke

E ven though the stroke itself comes out of the blue, the problems that cause it can be years in the making—thanks usually to a blood clot blocking a tiny artery in your brain or, less often, when an artery ruptures and blood is lost.

High blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, and a dangerous prediabetic condition called metabolic syndrome all raise your risk—and they’re all factors that can be reduced significantly by choosing the right foods. (See Blood Pressure Control on p. 10, Cholesterol Control on p. 27, and Diabetes and Prediabetes on p. 32 for more information on healing foods.)

Put Your Trust in Produce

In a study of more than 87,000 nurses, researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health found that women who ate the most fruits and vegetables were 40% less likely to have a stroke than those who ate the least. In another study, this one conducted at the University of California, San Diego, researchers discovered that people who ate a single serving of potassium-rich fruits
or vegetables a day were also able to cut their risk of stroke by 40%.

Fruits and vegetables are also beneficial because they’re high in fiber and contain powerful antioxidants, which help prevent the harmful LDL cholesterol from sticking to artery walls and blocking blood flow to the brain. It doesn’t take a lot of antioxidant-rich foods to get the benefits. In the Nurses’ Health Study, Harvard researchers found that women who got as little as 15 mg of beta-carotene daily, about the amount in one large carrot, reduced their risk of stroke.

**Expert Input**

Tea (green and black varieties) is an excellent source of flavonoids, which are good for brain health. A study of more than 550 men ages 50 to 69 found that those who got most of their flavonoids from tea reduced their risk of stroke by 73%, compared with those who got the least of these healthful compounds. It found that drinking at least 5 cups of tea daily can reduce stroke risk by more than two-thirds, compared with drinking less than 3 cups a day, according to Michael Hertog, PhD, of the National Institute of Public Health and Environmental Protection in the Netherlands.

**Thyroid Disease**

**Eat Up**

For overactive and underactive thyroid:

Calcium-rich foods: low-fat and fat-free dairy products, dark leafy greens, and whole milk

Fiber-rich foods: kelp, shellfish, spinach

Raw cruciferous vegetables: broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, kale

“Only until levels stabilize”

**Steer Clear**

For overactive and underactive thyroid:

Iodine-rich foods*: kelp, shellfish, spinach

“Only until levels stabilize”

**HYPERTHYROIDISM**

Since people with an overactive thyroid frequently lose weight, some thyroid doctors advise patients just beginning treatment to eat foods high in fat and protein. This prevents their overactive metabolisms from burning away needed fat and muscle. Meat, fish, poultry, whole milk, cheese, butter, nuts, and seeds are good sources.

Of course, this no-holds-barred eating strategy is only for the short term. Once the medication is fully active and the thyroid hormone levels are back to normal, you’ll need to eat fewer calories, or you’ll gain weight.

Sometimes, this can be tough. One idea: Gradually cut back on fat and refined carbohydrates as your thyroid function normalizes, and keep on eating fruits, vegetables, and moderate portions of whole grains so you feel full and satisfied after meals.

As it turns out, there are additional substances in vegetables, particularly cabbage, that may aid an overactive gland. Research suggests that these compounds may help the gland slow down naturally, says Baird. Broccoli, cabbage, brussels sprouts, cauliflower, kale, mustard greens, and turnips, as well as soybeans, peanuts, millet, and spinach, contain goitrogens—chemicals that block the thyroid’s ability to use iodine. With less iodine, the gland naturally produces less thyroid hormone, Baird explains.

Since cooking may deactivate the goitrogens in vegetables, it’s a good idea, when you’re eating for thyroid disease, to have your vegetables raw.

**HYPOTHYROIDISM**

People with an underactive gland, on the other hand, may need only half the calories of other

fat-rich foods*: butter, cheese, fish, poultry, meat, nuts, seeds, whole milk

Protein- and leafy greens products, dark and fat-free dairy foods: low-fat

Calcium-rich

Get the latest health and nutrition research delivered straight to your inbox. For overactive thyroid, it’s a good idea to take a calcium supplement or add nondairy calcium-rich foods. For those allergic to dairy, it’s a good idea to take a calcium supplement or add nondairy sources of calcium to your diet.

And eat to feed your bones calcium-rich foods. For those allergic to dairy, it’s a good idea to take a calcium supplement or add nondairy sources of calcium to your diet.

**Bone Up on Calcium**

One of the most significant risks to people with hyperthyroidism (an overactive gland) is the risk of developing bone-thinning osteoporosis, says Deah Baird, ND, a naturopathic doctor in private practice in Portland, Oregon.

Yet this doesn’t mean someone with an underactive thyroid (hypothyroidism) shouldn’t be vigilant: Even just a little excess hormone in the meds or leaking from the gland can lead to bone loss if it’s not caught for several years. Be sure to get regular checkups and tests your doctor recommends to ensure your dose is exactly right.

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**Eat for Your Condition**

People with underactive and overactive thyroids have opposite problems: Those that are underactive struggle to shake off pounds, while the others need to eat lots to keep up their weight and muscle mass.

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Ulcer

Eat Up
Beans
Carrot
Fiber-rich foods (p. 72)
Orange
Plantain
Raw cabbage or raw cabbage juice
Raw, unprocessed honey
Yogurt with live active cultures

Steer Clear
Alcoholic beverages
Coffee, including decaf
Milk

G
one are the days when doctors treated ulcers by putting people on a bland diet of milk, cream, and eggs. As it turns out, most ulcers are caused by a nasty bacterium called Helicobacter pylori—a tummy-damaging foe that can’t be vanquished with a bland diet. Still, if you have an ulcer, what you eat and drink does affect how you feel.

The Head Healer
Cabbage is one of the oldest folk remedies for ulcers, dating back to Roman times. It’s an extremely effective ulcer treatment, says Michael T. Murray, ND, a naturopathic doctor, professor at Bastyr University in Seattle, and author of Natural Alternatives to Over-the-Counter and Prescription Drugs. The healing usually takes place in less than 1 week, he adds. During an ulcer flare-up, Murray says, you should drink the juice from half a head (about 2 cups) of cabbage each day. If you prefer to chew your medicine, eating the same amount of raw cabbage is equally effective. Don’t cook the cabbage, however, since heat destroys its anti-ulcer abilities.

More Ulcer-Healing Foods
Soothe with sweet stuff When ulcer pain hits, most people are more likely to reach for a bottle of antacid than a spoonful of honey. But a dose of raw, unprocessed honey goes down a lot easier than that chalky white stuff, and it may do more than a bit of good, according to folk medicine researchers at King Saud University College of Medicine in Saudi Arabia.

Reach for fiber You can cut the risk of a duodenal ulcer (at the top of the small intestine) by eating more produce, especially beans, carrots, and oranges. These foods are high in soluble fiber, which protects the upper part of your small intestine from damage, notes nutrition researcher Walid Aldoori, ScD, medical director at Wyeth Consumer Healthcare in Mississauga, Ontario. Getting lots of fiber in your diet can help prevent or even heal ulcers. This is because these foods contain generous amounts of dietary fiber, which encourages the growth of the stomach’s protective mucous layer.

Yeast Infection

For a long time, women have been telling each other how effective yogurt is for clearing up yeast infections. Doctors have always been skeptical, but that’s about to change.

In a small study at Long Island Jewish Medical Center, women who got frequent yeast infections were given 1 cup of yogurt every day for 6 months. At the end of the study, researchers found that the rate of yeast infections had dropped by 75%. The yogurt used in the study contained live cultures of bacteria called Lactobacillus acidophilus, which are “friendly” bacteria that help control the growth of yeast in the intestines and vagina, explains Paul Reilly, ND, a naturopathic doctor and adjunct instructor at Bastyr University in Seattle. Eating yogurt helps restore the vagina’s natural environment, so yeast infections are much less likely to recur.

For most women, the amount of yogurt used in the study—one cup a day—is plenty, Reilly adds. The challenge may be finding yogurt that contains L. acidophilus bacteria, since most national yogurt brands contain other types of organisms. In fact, even when you do find a supermarket yogurt that contains the right bacteria, the concentration may be too low for it to be effective. Your best bet is to buy the yogurt at health food stores, which usually have a good selection to choose from.

Boosting Your Defenses
Grab some garlic In laboratory studies, garlic has been shown to kill yeast fungus on contact. In addition, it appears to stimulate the immune system cells that battle infection. Reilly recommends eating several cloves to a bulb of garlic a day to prevent or treat yeast infection. To be most effective, the cloves should be crushed or chopped. Cooking it won’t take away its healing power.

Leave sweets behind Research has shown that women who eat a lot of honey, sugar, or molasses get more yeast infections than women who eat less. For some, even the natural sugars in fruit and milk can be a problem.
Foods You Need to Know

Did your doc tell you to get more omega-3 fatty acids in your diet? Or while reading many of the entries in Food for What Ails You, did you wonder how to get enough antioxidants in your diet? This is the place to turn for more information.

We have compiled lists of the top foods in many nutrition categories, to make it easy for you to find just what you should be eating. Flip to p. 74 to find out which fish are the best sources of healthful omega-3 fatty acids. Or look up antioxidants (p. 70) to learn about the delicious foods that you can eat to stave off heart disease, the effects of aging, and many other conditions. Discover the best food sources of iron (p. 67). Learn more about the Mediterranean diet (p. 76). Use this section of the book to get on the road to good health.

Best Food Sources of Iron

How hard is it to get enough iron in food? It’s not too tricky if you eat meat, poultry, and seafood. If you eat little or none of these foods, though, you’ll need to pay more attention to your diet. The two tables that follow will help you make food choices to combat anemia, headache, and insomnia, as well as give your immune system a boost.

The tables list the best iron sources you can find, both for absorbable heme iron (found in meat, poultry, and seafood) and less absorbable nonheme iron (found in plants).

### Best Sources of Foods Containing Heme Iron

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Portion</th>
<th>Iron (mg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clams, steamed</td>
<td>Approx. 3 oz</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken livers, simmered</td>
<td>3 oz</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mussels, steamed</td>
<td>3 oz</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oysters, steamed</td>
<td>6 medium (1 1/2 oz)</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quail, whole</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef, bottom round roast, lean only, braised</td>
<td>3 oz</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuna, light meat, water packed</td>
<td>3 oz</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrimp, steamed</td>
<td>3 oz</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey, dark meat, roasted</td>
<td>3 oz</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken leg, roasted</td>
<td>3 oz</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Best Sources of Foods Containing Nonheme Iron

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Portion</th>
<th>Iron (mg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cream of Wheat cereal, quick cooking</td>
<td>1/4 cup</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tofu, regular</td>
<td>1/4 block (4 oz)</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pumpkin seeds, hulled, dried</td>
<td>1 oz</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lentils, boiled</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potato, baked</td>
<td>7 oz</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidney beans, boiled</td>
<td>1 1/2 cups</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinto beans, boiled</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black beans, boiled</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pumpkin, canned</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Split peas, boiled</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Brain Food

Not all memory problems are caused by diet. But when nothing else is amiss, it may be what you’re eating—or not eating—that’s slowing you down. Many researchers are discovering that when people are low in certain nutrients, their mental performance dips. In addition, you can keep Alzheimer’s disease and dementia at bay longer with a heart-healthy diet that focuses on the nutrients that have been found to be critical for brain function and aging, says Stanley Birge, MD, associate professor of medicine in the division of geriatrics and nutritional sciences at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis.

The body begins absorbing some nutrients a little less efficiently over time. So even though your need for calories doesn’t change, you may need additional nutrients to keep your mind sharp, says William Regelson, MD, professor of medicine at the Virginia Commonwealth University College of Medicine in Richmond.

Your Optimal Diet

Get enough B6 and B12 The B vitamins are perhaps the most essential nutrients for helping to keep your mind sharp. The easiest way to get enough B6 and B12 is to eat foods containing enriched grains. Vitamin B6 is abundant in baked potatoes, bananas, chickpeas, and turkey. One baked potato provides 0.4 mg of vitamin B6, or 20% of the DV, and one banana provides 0.7 mg, or 35% of the DV. For vitamin B12, meat and shellfish are good choices. Just 3 ounces of lean ground beef will provide 2 mcg of vitamin B12, or about a third of the DV. Clams are an incredible source, with 20 steamed clams providing 89 mcg, or 1,483% of the DV.

Eat cereal Sometimes the answers to life’s most perplexing memory problems are found inside a cereal box. “When people say that they’re losing their mental functions, one of the first things I tell them is that they should eat Total cereal. It has varying amounts of all the vitamins and minerals they need. You’d be surprised how many people are fine once they meet their nutritional needs,” says Regelson. A study conducted in Wales showed that eating breakfast cereal regularly was associated with reduced stress and improved physical and mental health. And eating breakfast does seem to boost performance in children.

Grab dairy Eat one daily serving of low-fat, low-sugar dairy such as milk, plain yogurt, cottage cheese, or ricotta cheese. Studies show that people who drink milk are less likely to develop Alzheimer’s disease.

Sink a line Omega-3 fatty acids are power agents for a healthy heart and arteries, which makes sure enough blood flows to the brain to keep it sharp. Eating oily cold-water fish such as salmon or Spanish mackerel two or three times a week will ensure you get enough omega-3s, but you can also take 2,000 to 3,000 mg a day of fish oil or flaxseed oil, Birge says.

Avoiding Brain Drain

Eat (some) carbs There’s a misconception that eating a low-carb diet means leaving carbohydrates out completely, says Carol Forman Helerstein, PhD, a licensed clinical nutritionist in private practice on Long Island and a consultant for the Zone Diet. The reality is that you can’t exist without carbohydrates. When you stop eating carbs, you starve your brain, lose concentration, feel fatigued, and experience mood swings. The brain simply needs carbohydrates. Fat wouldn’t stand a chance if you avoided processed foods and ate only the carbohydrates that Mother Nature provided, such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. “Mother Nature never made white rice or white pasta,” Helerstein says, so choose brown rice, whole wheat pasta and bread, and other whole grains, such as barley and oats.

Cut back on booze Killing brain cells is not the best way to get a high score in the memory department. Yet that’s exactly what many of us do to our gray matter every day. “Alcohol is a brain poison,” says Vernon Mark, MD, coauthor of Reversing Memory Loss. “Even if you’re doing everything else right, drinking too much alcohol can cause a significant decrease in memory function.” In fact, even small amounts of alcohol can damage cells in the part of the brain responsible for memory. At the very least, it’s a good idea to limit yourself to one or two drinks—meaning 12 ounces of beer, 5 ounces of wine, or 1½ ounces of liquor—a day. When you do drink, choose red wine.
Juicing for Optimal Nutrition

For millions of Americans, a handful of vitamin and mineral pills is as much a part of their morning fare as a bowl of cereal and a tall glass of orange juice. And while this isn’t a bad way to supplement your diet, there may be a better one.

“Juices are a multivitamin/mineral supplement for people who don’t want to take pills and capsules,” says Eve Campanelli, PhD, founder of Eve’s Herbs and a holistic health care practitioner in Beverly Hills. “And your body absorbs the nutrients from juices far, far better than it does from a pill.”

For maximum healing benefits, drink about a pint to a quart of mixed vegetable juices each day, recommends Steven Bailey, ND, a naturopathic doctor in Portland, Oregon, and coauthor of *Juice Alive.*

The Power of Pectin

The next time you sit down to breakfast, spread a little jam on a piece of whole grain toast. Then take a bite from a succulent pear. Even though their tastes and textures are totally different, these foods actually have something in common, and that something is very good for your health.

Jellies and jams, along with legumes, fruits, vegetables, and a variety of grains, contain pectin, a type of dietary fiber that acts as a natural thickener. Because pectin is a water-soluble fiber, it dissolves in the body, creating a sticky gel inside the intestine. The gel binds to potentially harmful substances, preventing them from being absorbed. At the same time, it causes nutrients to be absorbed a little more slowly. Both of these factors make pectin a key player in preventing a number of conditions, from heart disease and diabetes to weight gain.

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**Antioxidants for Defense**

All fruits and vegetables are great sources of antioxidant compounds. But which are the best? Researchers at Tufts University compiled a list of foods that are extremely high in vitamin C and beta-carotene. (It’s difficult to get enough vitamin E in foods alone, although cooking oils, nuts, seeds, and wheat germ are all good sources.) Here are some of their favorites.

**The Best Sources of Antioxidants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Portion</th>
<th>Vitamin C (mg)</th>
<th>Beta-Carotene (mg)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broccoli, cooked</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brussels sprouts, cooked</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butternut squash,</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baked and cubed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantaloupe</td>
<td>¼</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiwifruit</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navel orange</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papaya</td>
<td>½</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strawberries</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet potato, baked</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet red pepper,</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chopped</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watermelon, cubed</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*Pectin-Rich Foods*

- Blackberries
- Banana
- Beans
- Boysenberries
- Cranberries
- Gooseberries
- Grapefruit
- Oranges
- Pear
- Plum

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## Fiber-Rich Foods

If you asked your doctor to name the one thing you need to stay healthy, the answer would probably be dietary fiber. Because fiber is found in so many foods, it’s easy to get the recommended daily amount of 24 g for women and 30 g for men. To help you get started, here is a list of 40 top fiber foods.

### Top Fiber Foods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Portion</th>
<th>Soluble Fiber (g)</th>
<th>Insoluble Fiber (g)</th>
<th>Total Fiber (g)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cereals</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashi Go Lean</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashi Heart to Heart Instant</td>
<td>1/4 cup</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashi Heart to Heart Instant</td>
<td>1 packet</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kellogg's All-Bran, Orig.</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kellogg's All-Bran Yogurt Bites</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kellogg's Bran Buds</td>
<td>30 g</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kellogg's Complete Wheat Bran Flakes</td>
<td>1/4 cup</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quaker Oat Bran, cooked</td>
<td>1 cup</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quaker Oat Bran ready-to-eat</td>
<td>1/4 cup</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fruits</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple</td>
<td>1 med</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avocado</td>
<td>1 med</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackberries</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figs, dried</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gooseberries</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legumes</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black beans</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black-eyed peas</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chickpeas</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidney beans</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lentils</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy beans</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinto beans</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vegetables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artichoke</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broccoli, chopped, cooked</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brussels sprouts, fresh or frozen</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrots, sliced, cooked</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peas, cooked</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinach, cooked</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweet potato, mashed</td>
<td>1/2 cup</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Go Fish: The Best Omega-3 Sources

Cold-Water Fish
Here are some good-for-you fish recommendations from doctors and researchers.

- Anchovies
- Bluefin tuna
- Halibut
- Herring (canned or fresh)
- Pollack
- Salmon (canned or fresh)
- Sardines (canned or fresh)
- Spanish mackerel
- Trout
- Tuna (chunked, canned, and water packed)
- Whitefish (fresh, not smoked)

For years, Americans have wisely been reducing the amount of fat in their diets. But there’s one fat you may want to get more of instead of less: the fat in fish. Cold-water fish contain a number of polyunsaturated fats, which are known collectively as omega-3 fatty acids. These go a long way toward promoting better health. Consider the native people of Greenland. They eat fish to their hearts’ content, which may be why they have very low levels of heart disease. Similar benefits have been observed in fish eaters around the world. In fact, a team of scientists at the Harvard School of Public Health reported that overall mortality was 17% lower among people who ate fish twice a week compared with people who ate little or no seafood.

The American Heart Association recommends that all adults eat fish at least two times a week. However, it also notes that some types of fish may contain high levels of mercury, PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls), dioxins, and other environmental contaminants. Levels of these substances are generally highest in older, larger, predatory fish and marine mammals. Here’s more advice to help you pick the best.

Don’t fish for farm-raised varieties “Farm-raised fish are often fed grains instead of their natural diets, which affects the fat in their bodies—when they are fed omega-6 fats in the grains, they become sources of omega-6 fats,” says Jana Klauer, MD, a New York City–based physician, who specializes in the biology of fat reduction and is the author of How the Rich Get Thin.

Enjoy it canned One of the easiest ways to get more omega-3s into your diet is to pick up a can of water-packed chunk light tuna (avoid albacore, which has been linked to mercury).

Shop for salmon All fish provide some omega-3s, but salmon is perhaps the best choice, with a 3-ounce serving of chinook (king) salmon providing 3 g. “The king salmon are so big and fatty, they’re chock-full of omega-3 fats. It is really a spectacular fish to consume,” says Klauer.

Fat Substitutes

Now you can indulge without blowing your diet. Using fat substitutes is not an alternative to a diet that’s high in naturally low-fat foods such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. The substitutes, however, are a great way to reduce (or even eliminate) the fat in many common foods, like cheese and salad dressings.

And the fat savings can be substantial. Using 2 tablespoons of fat-free Italian salad dressing, for example, can save 11 g of fat and more than 100 calories over the same amount of the regular kind. Similarly, you can slice off 5 g of fat and 40 calories from a grilled cheese sandwich by using fat-free cheese instead of regular American.

Getting the Best

The original and possibly the best fat substitutes are those made from carbohydrates, which are listed on food labels as dextrins, maltodextrins, modified food starches, polydextrose, and gums. They contain between zero and 4 calories per gram, instead of the 9 calories provided by fat. The best thing about carbohydrate-based fat substitutes is that they’re made from fiber, says Mark Kantor, PhD, associate professor of nutrition and food science at the University of Maryland. “They not only have fewer fat calories, but because they contain soluble fiber, they can help lower cholesterol levels as well as help control your weight,” he says.

Creamy Protein

There’s nothing quite like the smooth, creamy texture of ice cream, which traditionally comes from the high fat content. To duplicate the mouthfeel of full-fat ice cream, manufacturers use fat substitutes made from proteins such as milk or egg whites, which glide across your tongue in the same way that fat does.

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Protein-based fat substitutes, such as Simplesse and Trailblazer, are listed on the label as microparticulated protein products. Providing 1 to 4 calories per gram, they’re used mainly in ice cream, butter, sour cream, yogurt, mayonnaise, and other creamy foods.
The Mediterranean Diet

During the early 1960s, when the rate of heart disease in the United States was skyrocketing, people in Greece had some of the lowest heart disease rates in the world. Here's the curious part: They were enjoying robust good health even though their diet racked up nearly 40% of its calories from fat, and they generally washed down their meals with a glass or two of wine.

Scientists discovered that it wasn’t only in Greece that people were living longer and healthier but also in nearby nations such as France, Italy, and Spain. Clearly, these folks were onto something.

The Mediterranean diet is most renowned for its role in helping to keep the heart healthy, but it also appears to reduce the risks of other health threats, among them cancers of the breast and colon. Studies show that compared with women elsewhere in the world, women in some Mediterranean countries have half the risk (or less) of getting breast cancer. Researchers also learned that the Mediterranean diet has a positive effect on cholesterol and insulin resistance, and it lowers the risk of metabolic syndrome; heart attack and heart disease; and cancer in obese patients and patients who have had a heart attack.

How to Eat Like a Greek

Choose olive oil This monounsaturated fat is the principal fat in the Mediterranean diet, with total fat intake ranges from 25 to 35% of total calories. Antioxidant compounds in olive oil help prevent chemical changes in the body that can cause the dangerous LDL cholesterol to stick to the lining of artery walls.

Eat less red meat Even though people in Mediterranean countries eat as much fat as we do (or more), they eat relatively little meat. Red meat is reserved for a few times a month.

Enjoy fish and poultry In Mediterranean households, these foods appear on the menu every week, and so people consume only minuscule amounts of artery-clogging saturated fat.

Get five-a-day protection The folks at the American Heart Association would be delighted if they could get us to eat the five servings (or more) of fruits and vegetables that people in the Mediterranean region eat every day.

Load up with fiber Foods rich in fiber help keep your weight down by filling you up without a lot of fat and calories, and they also help block the absorption of certain fats and cholesterol.

Drink to your health Wine—especially red wine—is a part of almost every meal in the Mediterranean region. Wine contains compounds called phenols that help prevent LDL cholesterol from sticking to artery walls. It also keeps platelets in blood from sticking together and causing clots. Remember not to go overboard.
Meals That Heal

Put your newfound knowledge to work by whipping up some delicious, good-for-you breakfasts, entrées, side dishes, and desserts. On the side, we list the health concerns that the recipe may help prevent or treat.

BREAKFAST

Try this to help prevent or treat...
Atherosclerosis
Blood pressure
Breast cancer
Carpal tunnel syndrome
Cholesterol
Constipation
Depression
Food allergies
Heart health
Herpes
Immune system
Insomnia
Premenstrual problems
Stroke

Flax-Banana Bread

- TIME: 15 MINUTES + BAKING AND COOLING TIME
- SERVINGS: 10 SLICES
1/2 c packed light brown sugar
1/2 c low-fat buttermilk
1/4 c fat-free egg substitute
3 Tbsp canola oil
1/4 c all-purpose flour
1/4 c whole wheat flour
1/4 c ground flaxseed
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp baking soda
1/2 tsp salt
1 c pureéd bananas

1. PREHEAT oven to 350°F. Coat nonstick 8” × 4” loaf pan with cooking spray.
2. COMBINE sugar, buttermilk, egg substitute, and oil in large bowl. Whisk until smooth.
3. COMBINE all other ingredients except bananas, in medium bowl. Whisk to mix. Add to liquid ingredients, and stir just until blended; do not overmix.
4. ADD bananas, and stir to mix. Pour into prepared pan.
5. BAKE for 40 to 50 minutes, or until knife inserted in the center comes out clean.
6. REMOVE pan to wire rack, and let bread cool slightly. While still slightly warm, turn bread out of pan.

NUTRITIONAL INFO PER SLICE
202 cal, 5 g pro, 30 g carb, 3 g fiber, 8 g fat, 0 g sat fat, 0 mg chol, 227 mg sodium

Try this to help prevent or treat...
Alzheimer’s
Blood pressure
Blood sugar
Cholesterol
Colon cancer
Constipation
Diverticulosis
Gas
Gastrointestinal tract cancers
Gout
Heart health
Infertility
Insomnia
Mouth cancer
Osteoporosis
Overweight
Rectum cancer
Stomach cancer
Stroke
Throat cancer

Whole Wheat Pancakes

- TIME: 10 MINUTES
- SERVINGS: 4 (3 PANCAKES EACH)
1/4 c whole wheat flour
1/4 c toasted wheat germ
1/2 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
1/2 tsp salt
1/4 c fat-free milk
1/4 c fat-free egg substitute
1 Tbsp unsalted butter, melted

1. COMBINE flour, wheat germ, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt in large bowl. Mix well.
2. ADD milk, egg substitute, and butter. Mix just until ingredients are blended. Do not overmix.
3. COAT large nonstick skillet with cooking spray. Heat over medium-high heat until drop of water dropped into skillet sizzles.
4. SCOOP out slightly less than 1/4 cup of batter for each pancake, using 1/4-cup measuring cup as ladle. Drop batter into pan, being careful not to crowd pancakes. Cook for 2 minutes, or until edges begin to look dry. Flip and cook for 1 minute, or until browned on bottom. Remove from pan.
5. REMOVE skillet from heat, and coat with more cooking spray. Continue until all batter is used.

NUTRITIONAL INFO PER SERVING
219 cal, 12 g pro, 36 g carb, 6 g fiber, 4 g fat, 2 g sat fat, 9 mg chol, 295 mg sodium

Note: Place pancakes on baking sheet in 175°F oven to keep them warm until all are cooked. Serve with maple syrup or honey, if desired.

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**Baked Chicken with Prunes**

**TIME:** 40 MINUTES  
**SERVINGS:** 4

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat 12" x 8" baking dish with cooking spray. Arrange chicken in dish in single layer.

2. Combine prunes and wine in small microwaveable bowl. Microwave on high for 1 minute, or until wine boils. Pour mixture over chicken. Stir pan juices to combine spices, and spoon over chicken. 

3. Bake for 30 minutes, or until chicken is no longer pink in center. Test for doneness by inserting tip of sharp knife in center of breast half. Sprinkle with salt, and season with pepper to taste.

4. Remove chicken to 4 plates. Stir pan juices to combine spices, and spoon over chicken.

**Nutritional Info per Serving**  
218 cal, 27 g pro, 22 g carb, 2 g fiber, 2 g fat, 0 g sat fat, 66 mg chol, 220 mg sodium

---

**Broccoli Pesto Pizzas**

**TIME:** 25 MINUTES  
**SERVINGS:** 4 (2 Pizzas Each)

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Place broccoli and garlic in microwaveable bowl. Cover, and microwave on high for 45 seconds.

2. Combine prunes and wine in small microwaveable bowl. Microwave on high for 1 minute, or until wine boils. Pour mixture over chicken. Stir pan juices to combine spices, and spoon over chicken.

**Nutritional Info per Serving**  
218 cal, 27 g pro, 22 g carb, 2 g fiber, 2 g fat, 0 g sat fat, 66 mg chol, 220 mg sodium

---

**Asian Noodles with Vegetables**

**TIME:** 20 MINUTES  
**SERVINGS:** 4


2. Add egg, and swirl pan so egg coats bottom. Cook about 1 minute, or until almost set. Carefully turn and cook a few seconds until egg is set on bottom.

3. Remove egg from pan, and place on cutting board to cool slightly. Roll up tightly, and cut into strips. Set aside.

4. Cook noodles (discard seasoning packet or reserve for another use) in pot of boiling water for 3 minutes, or according to package directions. Drain, rinse with cold water, and drain again. Set aside.

5. Heat canola oil in large nonstick skillet or wok over medium heat. Add garlic and cook for 30 seconds, or until fragrant. Add broccoli and carrot. Stir-fry until bok choy starts to wilt, 1 to 2 minutes.

**Nutritional Info per Serving**  
309 cal, 10 g pro, 52 g carb, 5 g fiber, 7 g fat, 1 g sat fat, 53 mg chol, 431 mg sodium

---

**Try this to help prevent or treat...**

- Alzheimer’s
- Asthma
- Blood pressure
- Cholesterol
- Colds and flu
- Colon cancer
- Depression
- Herpes
- Immune system
- Lung cancer
- Lupus
- Memory problems
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Stroke
- Yeast infection

---

**Entrees**

**Try this to help prevent...**

- Blood sugar
- Cholesterol
- Colds and flu
- Constipation
- Gout
- Heart health
- Hyperthyroidism
- Immune system
- Overweight

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Meals That Heal  ■  ENTÉRÉS

Dijon Pork Chops with Cabbage

TIME: 45 MINUTES  ■  SERVINGS: 4

4 center-cut pork chops  
(4 oz each), trimmed
4 tsp Dijon mustard
1/2 head red cabbage (about 1 pound), cored and thinly sliced
2 Granny Smith apples, peeled and grated
1/3 tsp salt
1 tsp + 1 Tbsp canola oil
1 Tbsp grated fresh ginger
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp ground cloves
1 Tbsp pure maple syrup
2 tsp cider vinegar

1. BRUSH both sides of pork chops with mustard, and set aside.
2. COOK until squash is tender but not mushy, 25 to 30 minutes. Test for doneness by inserting tip of sharp knife into piece of squash. Add more water if necessary to keep squash from sticking. With back of large spoon, break tomatoes into smaller pieces. Add kale, basil, and sage.
3. HEAT 1 teaspoon of oil in large covered skillet over medium-low heat. Add ginger, cinnamon, and cloves. Cook, stirring, until fragrant, 10 to 15 seconds. Stir in cabbage mixture and maple syrup. Reduce heat to low, cover, and cook until ingredients are softened and cooked through, about 30 minutes.
4. HEAT remaining 1 tablespoon of oil in large heavy skillet over medium heat while cabbage mixture is cooking. Add pork in single layer. Cook, turning at halfway point, until pork is no longer pink in center, about 9 minutes.
5. UNCOVER cabbage, stir in vinegar, and increase heat to medium. Cook until liquid is nearly evaporated, about 5 minutes. Serve each chop with mound of cabbage.

NUTRITIONAL INFO PER SERVING
157 cal, 4 g pro, 29 g carb, 5 g fiber, 4 g fat, 1 g sat fat, 0 mg chol, 193 mg sodium

Butternut Squash, Kale, and Tomato Stew

TIME: 20 MINUTES  ■  SERVINGS: 4

1 sm butternut squash
8 oz kale
1 Tbsp olive oil
1 Tbsp minced garlic
1 can (16 oz) whole tomatoes (with juice)
1/2 c water
1 Tbsp chopped fresh basil
1 Tbsp chopped fresh sage
1. PIERCE squash in 3 or 4 places with sharp knife. Microwave on high, turning once, for 2 to 3 minutes, or just until squash starts to soften under skin. To test, press with your thumb.
2. CUT squash in quarters. Discard seeds. Cut off and discard peel. Cut squash into 1" chunks.
3. RINSE kale, and strip leaves from coarse stems. Coarsely chop leaves.
4. HEAT oil over medium heat in large saucepan. Add garlic and cook for 20 seconds, or until fragrant. Add squash, tomatoes and their juice, and water. Cover, and reduce heat to medium-low.
5. COOK until squash is tender but not mushy, 25 to 30 minutes. Test for doneness by inserting tip of sharp knife into piece of squash. Add more water if necessary to keep squash from sticking. With back of large spoon, break tomatoes into smaller pieces. Add kale, basil, and sage.
6. COOK until kale softens, 3 to 4 minutes longer.

NUTRITIONAL INFO PER SERVING
230 cal, 11 g pro, 20 g carb, 3 g fiber, 12 g fat, 4 g sat fat, 10 mg chol, 540 mg sodium

Note: Serve over hot cooked brown rice or quinoa.
Mediterranean-Style Penne

**TIME:** 25 MINUTES  
**SERVINGS:** 4

- 8 oz penne  
- ½ c dry-packed sun-dried tomatoes, cut into 3 or 4 strips each  
- 2 Tbsp olive oil  
- 2 cloves garlic, minced  
- 1 can (15 oz) cannellini or Great Northern beans, rinsed and drained  
- 2 Tbsp minced fresh sage  
- ½ tsp salt  
- Freshly ground black pepper

1. **COOK** pasta in large pot of boiling water according to package directions. Add tomatoes 1 minute before pasta is done.  
2. **SCOOP** out ¼ cup of cooking water, and set aside. Drain pasta and tomatoes. Place in large bowl. Add reserved cooking water, and toss to mix.  
3. **HEAT** oil in medium saucepan over medium heat. Add garlic, and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Stir in beans, sage, and salt. Cook, stirring, until beans are heated through, 1 minute longer. Season to taste with pepper.  
4. **POUR** bean mixture over pasta, and toss gently to combine.  

**NUTRITIONAL INFO PER SERVING**  
344 cal, 12 g pro, 57 g carb, 6 g fiber, 8 g fat, 2 g sat fat, 0 mg chol, 444 mg sodium

Poached Cod with Mixed Vegetables

**TIME:** 18 MINUTES  
**SERVINGS:** 4

- 4 cod fillets (6 oz each)  
- 1 fennel bulb  
- 2 carrots, cut into matchstick pieces  
- 1 sm zucchini, cut into matchstick pieces  
- 2 shallots or 1 sm onion, thinly sliced  
- 1 c apple juice, divided  
- ¼ tsp salt, divided  
- Freshly ground black pepper  
- 2 c water

1. **RINSE** cod with cold water, and pat dry with paper towels.  
2. **TRIM** fennel, reserving narrow top stems and some feathery leaves. Cut bulb in half lengthwise. Cut out and discard core. Cut into matchstick pieces.  
3. **COAT** large skillet with cooking spray, and heat over medium-high heat. Add fennel, carrots, zucchini, and shallots. Cook, tossing, for 1 minute, then stir in ¼ cup of apple juice and ¼ teaspoon of salt.  
4. **COOK,** stirring, until vegetables are crisp-tender, 2 to 3 minutes. Season to taste with pepper. Transfer vegetables to platter, and cover to keep warm.  
5. **COMBINE** water, reserved fennel stems and leaves, and remaining apple juice in same skillet. Bring to simmer over medium heat. Reduce heat to low, and add cod. Cook, turning once, until cod is opaque in center, 4 to 5 minutes. Test for doneness by inserting tip of sharp knife into fillet.  
6. **REMOVE** cod with slotted spatula, and place on top of reserved vegetables. Sprinkle with remaining ¼ teaspoon of salt. Season to taste with pepper.

**NUTRITIONAL INFO PER SERVING**  
356 cal, 12 g pro, 49 g carb, 10 g fiber, 13 g fat, 2 g sat fat, 3 mg chol, 211 mg sodium

**Other recipes:**
- Pasta with Pesto and Tomatoes  
- Mixed Vegetables  
- Poached Cod with Mixed Vegetables
Steamed Salmon with Leeks

- TIME: 15 MINUTES
- SERVINGS: 4

1. Rinse salmon in cold water. Pat dry with paper towels.
2. Trim tough green part and root end from leek, and discard. Cut leek in half lengthwise. Rinse with cold water, pulling apart layers to remove grit. Cut leek into very thin slices. Spread two-thirds of slices evenly over large microwaveable plate. Cover loosely with waxed paper. Microwave on high for 4 to 6 minutes, or until salmon is opaque in center. Test for doneness by inserting tip of sharp knife into center of fillet. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving.

NUTRITIONAL INFO PER SERVING
- 230 cal, 11 g pro, 20 g carb, 3 g fiber, 12 g fat, 4 g sat fat,
- 230 mg chol, 540 mg sodium

3. Combine ginger, sherry, soy sauce, and remaining leek slices in small bowl.
4. Place salmon on plate over microwaved leek slices, skin side down and with pieces arranged in spoke fashion so thickest parts face outward. Pour ginger mixture evenly over top. Cover loosely with waxed paper. Microwave on high for 4 to 6 minutes, or until golden and cooked through. Pour sauce over turkey.

White Bean and Chicken Chili

- TIME: 25 MINUTES
- SERVINGS: 4

1. Heat oil in medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Add garlic, onion, and green parts separated. Cook, stirring, until softened. Add chili powder, cumin, and chicken broth. Simmer until liquid is slightly reduced, about 15 minutes. Stir in chicken, and simmer 5 minutes longer.

4. Divide chili among 4 bowls, and garnish with scallion greens. Serve with hot pepper sauce, if desired.

NUTRITIONAL INFO PER SERVING
- 190 cal, 16 g pro, 20 g carb, 5 g fiber, 5 g fat, 1 g sat fat,
- 45 mg chol, 208 mg sodium

Turkey Cutlets with Oregano-Lemon Sauce

- TIME: 30 MINUTES
- SERVINGS: 4

2 cloves garlic, minced
1/4 c defatted reduced-sodium chicken broth
3 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
1. Rinse turkey and pat dry.
2. Combine flour, 1/2 teaspoon of oregano, and salt on plate.

Mix with fork. Place turkey cutlets in flour mixture, turning to dust both sides evenly. Shake off excess.
3. Heat oil in skillet. Add cutlets in single layer, and cook for 2 to 3 minutes per side, or until golden and cooked through. Check for doneness by inserting tip of sharp knife into cutlet.

4. Remove turkey to plate. Add garlic to skillet, and cook for 10 to 12 seconds, or until fragrant. Add broth, lemon juice, and remaining 1/4 teaspoon oregano. Cook, stirring, for 2 to 3 minutes, or until hot. Pour sauce over turkey.

NUTRITIONAL INFO PER SERVING
- 213 cal, 17 g pro, 17 g carb, 3 g fiber, 10 g fat, 1 g sat fat,
- 54 mg chol, 208 mg sodium

Try this to help prevent or treat...
- Alzheimer’s
- Arthritis
- Asthma
- Cholesterol
- Depression
- Gas
- Heart health
- Heartburn
- Immune system
- Liver cancer
- Lupus
- Memory problems
- Migraines
- Premenstrual
- Problems
- Psoriasis
- Problems
- Premenstrual
- Problems
- Psoriasis
- Stroke
- Yeast infection

Try this to help prevent or treat...
- Asthma
- Blood pressure
- Blood sugar
- Breast cancer
- Cholesterol control
- Colds and flu
- Colon cancer
- Hay fever
- Heart health
- Herpes
- Immune system
- Insomnia
- Liver cancer
- Memory problems
- Overweight
- Premenstrual problems
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Stroke
- Ulcer
- Yeast infection

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SIDE DISHES

Carrot-Walnut Salad

TIME: 30 MINUTES
SERVINGS: 4

½ c golden raisins
½ c chopped walnuts
2 Tbsp rice wine vinegar
1 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
tsp fresh lemon juice
tsp honey
½ tsp salt
4 lg carrots, shredded
¼ c chopped parsley

1. SOAK raisins in hot tap water until plumped, about 20 minutes. Drain. Preheat oven to 250°F.
2. PLACE walnuts on baking sheet, and toast until lightly browned, about 5 minutes; set aside.
3. COMBINE vinegar, oil, lemon juice, honey, and salt in small bowl.
4. TOSS carrots, walnuts, parsley, and raisins with dressing in medium bowl, just before serving.

NUTRITIONAL INFO PER SERVING
170 cal, 3g pro, 30 g carb, 3 g fiber, 10 g fat, 0 g sat fat, 0 mg chol, 125 mg sodium

Chickpeas with Onions and Raisins

TIME: 10 MINUTES
SERVINGS: 6

1 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
c finely chopped red onions
2 Tbsp raisins
cans (15 oz) each chickpeas, rinsed and drained
1 Tbsp chopped fresh cilantro

1. HEAT oil in medium saucepan over medium heat.
2. ADD onions and raisins, and cook until onions start to soften, about 4 to 5 minutes. Stir in chickpeas.
3. COOK, stirring, until heated through, about 2 to 3 minutes.
4. REMOVE from heat. Stir in cilantro.

NUTRITIONAL INFO PER SERVING
133 cal, 5 g pro, 20 g carb, 5 g fiber, 4 g fat, 0 g sat fat, 0 mg chol, 119 mg sodium

Sautéed Bell Peppers

TIME: 10 MINUTES
SERVINGS: 4

1 green bell pepper
1 red bell pepper
1 yellow bell pepper
2 tsp olive oil
1 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
½ tsp salt
Freshly ground black pepper

1. cut green, red, and yellow peppers in half lengthwise. Remove and discard ribs and seeds. Cut peppers lengthwise into ¼"-wide strips.
2. PLACE bell peppers in large skillet. Add peppers, and cook until they just begin to soften, 2 to 3 minutes.
3. REMOVE from heat, and sprinkle with vinegar and salt. Season to taste with pepper. Toss, and serve warm.

NUTRITIONAL INFO PER SERVING
44 cal, 1 g pro, 6 g carb, 2 g fiber, 2 g fat, 0 g sat fat, 0 mg chol, 77 mg sodium

Spicy Black Bean and Corn Salad

TIME: 10 MINUTES
SERVINGS: 4

1 can (15 oz) black beans, rinsed and drained
c frozen corn kernels, thawed and drained
galapeños peppers, seeded and chopped
tomatoes, chopped
sm red onion, chopped
cloves garlic, minced
Tbsp fresh lime juice
1 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
tsp chili powder

1. COMBINE beans, corn, peppers, tomatoes, onion, and garlic in large bowl.
2. STIR together lime juice, oil, and chili powder in cup, and pour over salad; toss well.

NUTRITIONAL INFO PER SERVING
193 cal, 8 g pro, 36 g carb, 8 g fiber, 5 g fat, 1 g sat fat, 0 mg chol, 283 mg sodium
DESSERTS

Try this to help prevent or treat...
Alzheimer’s
Asthma
Blood pressure
Blood sugar
Cholesterol
Depression
Gas
Hay fever
Immune system
Infertility
Insomnia
Lung cancer
Lupus
Memory problems
Overweight
Premenstrual problems
Psoriasis
Rheumatoid arthritis
Stroke

1. WHISK cornstarch with apple juice in medium saucepan until cornstarch dissolves. Whisk in honey and vanilla extract. Stir in cherries, cinnamon, and cardamom (if using).

2. COOK over medium-low heat, stirring frequently, until sauce thickens and turns transparent, about 4 to 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Serve warm.

NUTRITIONAL INFO PER SERVING

- 1/2 CUP: 72 cal, 1 g pro, 18 g carb, 0 g fiber, 0 g fat, 0 g sat fat, 0 mg chol, 1 mg sodium

Note: Sauce can be refrigerated in covered container for up to 3 days. Reheat gently in microwave or in saucepan before serving. Serve over pancakes, waffles, or fat-free frozen yogurt.

Chocolate-Banana Frozen Pops

Try this to help prevent or treat...
Blood pressure
Cancer
Heart health
Heartburn
Hyperthyroidism
Kidney stone
Stroke

1. INSERT wooden stick into cut end of each banana piece.

2. POUR chocolate sauce over bananas until they’re completely coated, then roll chocolate-coated bananas in peanuts.

3. PLACE pops in freezer for at least 2 hours, or until frozen.

NUTRITIONAL INFO PER SERVING

- 318 cal, 4 g pro, 31 g carb, 3 g fiber, 22 g fat, 9 g sat fat, 0 mg chol, 21 mg sodium
Raisin Coffeecake Ring

**TIME:** 40 MINUTES • RISING TIME  
**SERVINGS:** 12  
**COFFEECAKE**  
1/2 c raisins  
1/2 c fresh orange juice  
2 tsp vanilla extract  
1/2 tsp ground cinnamon  
2 tsp unsalted butter  
1 lb frozen whole wheat bread dough, thawed  
**GLAZE**  
2 Tbsp fresh orange juice  
3 Tbsp confectioners’ sugar  
1 tsp unsalted butter  
**TO MAKE COFFEECAKE**  
1. **COMBINE** raisins, orange juice, vanilla extract, and cinnamon in medium saucepan.  
2. **COOK** over medium heat, stirring frequently, until raisins have absorbed all liquid, 5 to 7 minutes. Remove from heat, and stir in butter. Cover, and set aside.  
3. **COAT** baking sheet with cooking spray. On work surface, pat and stretch dough into 12” × 6” rectangle. Spread evenly with raisin mixture, leaving about 1/2” uncovered along 1 long side. Starting with other long side, roll dough tightly. Pinch edges together to seal.  

**TO MAKE GLAZE**  
1. **COMBINE** orange juice, sugar, and butter in small microwaveable bowl.  
2. **MICROWAVE** on high for about 30 seconds, or until butter melts. Whisk until smooth.  
3. **BRUSH** over warm coffee-cake. Transfer coffee-cake to wire rack to cool.  

**NUTRITIONAL INFO PER SERVING**  
172 cal, 5 g pro, 36 g carb, 7 g fiber, 3 g fat, 1 g sat fat, 3 mg chol, 214 mg sodium

Oatmeal-Apricot Cookies

**TIME:** 20 MINUTES  
**SERVINGS:** 28 COOKIES  
1/3 c dried apricots, coarsely chopped  
1/2 c boiling water  
1 c packed light brown sugar  
1/4 c unsalted butter, at room temperature  
1/4 c fat-free egg substitute  
1/2 tsp vanilla extract  
1/2 c all-purpose flour  
1 tsp ground cinnamon  
1 tsp baking soda  
1/4 tsp salt  
2 1/2 c quick-cooking rolled oats  

**TO MAKE COOKIES**  
1. **TRANSFER** dough to baking sheet, forming into ring. Pinch ends together. Use sharp knife to slice into ring at 12 intervals about 1/2” apart (cut almost, but not all the way, through dough). Spread cuts out slightly so filling is visible.  
2. **COVER** dough loosely with plastic wrap, and set aside in warm spot for 2 to 4 hours, or until doubled in bulk.  
3. **PREHEAT** oven to 350°F. Remove plastic wrap, and bake dough for 20 to 25 minutes, or until golden. Leave on baking sheet until you make glaze.  

**TO MAKE GLAZE**  
1. **COMBINE** orange juice, sugar, and butter in small microwaveable bowl.  
2. **MICROWAVE** on high for about 30 seconds, or until butter melts. Whisk until smooth.  
3. **BRUSH** over warm coffee-cake. Transfer coffee-cake to wire rack to cool.  

**NUTRITIONAL INFO PER SERVING**  
84 cal, 2 g pro, 15 g carb, 1 g fiber, 2 g fat, 1 g sat fat, 4 mg chol, 70 mg sodium
Chocolate Mint Pudding Cake

- **TIME:** 35 MINUTES + COOLING TIME
- **SERVINGS:** 8

1. **PREHEAT** oven to 350°F. Coat 12” x 8” baking dish with cooking spray. Set aside.

2. **COMBINE** flour, granulated sugar, baking soda, baking powder, salt, and 1/4 cup of cocoa in large bowl. Whisk to mix.

3. **ADD** buttermilk, applesauce, vanilla extract, and peppermint extract. Stir just until dry ingredients are well incorporated. Do not overbeat; batter will look like brownie batter and will be a bit lumpy because of applesauce. Pour into prepared dish.

4. **COMBINE** brown sugar and remaining 1/4 cup cocoa in small bowl. Mix well. Sprinkle over batter. Pour on water; do not stir.

5. **TRANSFER** carefully to oven. Bake 25 to 30 minutes, or until top is set and cake moves away from sides of pan. Cool on wire rack for 20 to 30 minutes.

6. **SCOOP** cake out of pan with spatula, turning each piece upside down on plate so pudding is on top, to serve.

**NUTRITIONAL INFO PER SERVING** 318 cal, 4 g pro, 31 g carb, 3 g fiber, 22 g fat, 9 g sat fat, 0 mg chol, 21 mg sodium

Note: Cake tastes best warm. If cake has cooled, place individual pieces on microwaveable plate, and microwave on high power for 30 seconds, or until warm.

Strawberry Tart with Oat-Cinnamon Crust

- **TIME:** 30 MINUTES + CHILLING TIME
- **SERVINGS:** 6

**CRUST**

1. **PREHEAT** oven to 375°F. Coat 9” circle with rim 3/4” high.

2. **COMBINE** old-fashioned or quick-cooking rolled oats, all-purpose flour, ground cinnamon, baking soda, and sugar.

3. **COMBINE** oats, flour, sugar, cinnamon, and baking soda in medium bowl. Mix with fork until blended. Stir in oil and 2 tablespoons of yogurt to make soft, slightly sticky dough. If dough is too stiff, add another tablespoon of yogurt.

4. **BAKE** 15 minutes, or until firm and golden. Remove from oven. Set aside to cool. With spatula, gently ease crust onto large, flat serving plate.

**STRAWBERRY FILLING**

1. **WASH** strawberries, and pat dry with paper towels. Slice off stem ends and discard.

2. **COMBINE** strawberry spread and vanilla extract in small microwaveable bowl. Microwave on high for 10 to 15 seconds, or until melted.

3. **BRUSH** generously over crust. Arrange strawberries, cut side down, evenly over crust. Brush or dab remaining spread evenly over strawberries, with some spread between strawberries to secure them.

4. **REFRIGERATE** for at least 30 minutes, or until spread has jelled. Cut into wedges.

**NUTRITIONAL INFO PER SERVING** 172 cal, 5 g pro, 36 g carb, 7 g fiber, 3 g fat, 1 g sat fat, 3 mg chol, 214 mg sodium

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Try this to help prevent or treat:

Asthma  
Blood pressure  
Cancer  
Cholesterol  
Gas  
Hay fever  
Heart health  
Immune system  
Irritable bowel syndrome  
Lung cancer  

Try this to help prevent or treat:

Alzheimer’s  
Asthma  
Blood pressure  
Blood sugar  
Celiac disease  
Cholesterol  
Colds  
Constipation  
Depression  
Gas  
Gout  
Hay fever  
Heart health  
Immune system  
Insomnia  
Kidney stone  
Lung cancer  
Lupus  
Memory problems  
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Rheumatoid arthritis  
Stroke  
Ulcer  
Yeast infection
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