

Top Foods for Health

We all know that some food choices are better for our health than others. We know that fish is a better choice than pork and that unrefined, high fiber carbohydrates trump refined carbohydrates. OK, those were the *gimmies!*

However, it may not be so easy to tell which foods are the best choices for health when you're standing in front of the produce section at the grocery store or scanning the menu when you dine out. So, I have come up with a list of my top foods for health & vitality and have given you a few reasons on why they make my list. If you understand the reason why these foods are the best selections for your health, it will increase your likeliness of choosing them for you and your family.

Virgin Rules for What You Should Eat:

Apples

- Contain a multitude of phytonutrients including quercetin-they are great for gut health and which may help lower cholesterol
- Pectin (soluble fiber) helps keeps your bowels regular and reduces painful attacks of diverticulitis
- Pectin also acts as a detoxifier by grabbing heavy metals & mercury and ushering them out of the body

Avocado

- Raise HDL (good cholesterol) & stabilize blood sugar
- Contains Glutathione-the antioxidant powerhouse
- Naturally source for lutein, potassium & magnesium

Beets

- That purple-blue color is loaded with betacyanin (cancer protection) as well as the folacin & vitamin C
- Glutathione protects liver cells
- Beet tops are an excellent source of calcium, beta carotene & iron

Berries (especially blueberries)

- Ellagic acid-a natural substance that may prevent cancer
- High in fiber, vitamin C and potassium
- Incredible source of antioxidant protection

Broccoli

- Fiber, fiber, fiber
- Loaded with carotenoids & antioxidants including sulforaphane, vitamin A, vitamin B6 & calcium
- Stimulates enzymes for detoxifying chemicals

Cherries

- Antioxidants: vitamin C, beta carotene, vitamin A replace free-radicals before they do damage
- Flavonoids like quercetin, as well as POH and ellagic acids help protect against cancer
- Powerful phytochemicals help reduce the pain from arthritis and gout

DHA eggs

- Choline, a key nutrient for cell flexibility and integrity
- Choline also has significant effects on the brain and nervous system
- Its high ratio of B vitamins and DHA (an omega 3 fatty acid) promotes a healthy heart
- Not to mention the high lutein concentration to protect the eyes & high quality protein in the egg whites

Extra virgin cold pressed organic olive oil

- Rich in monounsaturated fatty acids & fat soluble vitamin E
- Protection from LDL oxidation (the process that forms plaque in arteries)
- Improves blood sugar levels & reduces inflammation

Fennel bulb

- Rich in phytonutrients like: rutin, quercetin, kaempferol glycosides which creates its strong antioxidant effects
- Excellent source of vitamin C
- Powerful antioxidant anethole reduces inflammation and acts as an anti-cancer agent

Freshly ground flaxseed meal

- Its fiber helps lower cholesterol
- Healthy fat ALA (alpha-linolenic acid) a precursor for EPA (an omega 3 found in fish)
- Reduces inflammation, protection against cancer & diabetes and protects the heart
- Its mucilaginous texture supports gut healing

Garlic

- Lowers LDL & triglycerides levels
- Natural sulfur-compounds (allicin) are anti-bacterial
- The numerous cardiovascular benefits are not only due to the sulfur compounds, but also: B6, vitamin C, manganese & selenium
- Boosts the immune system

Kabocha squash (a winter squash)

- Carotenoids like beta-cryptoxanthin help protect against lung cancer
- Vitamin A helps protect against emphysema
- Excellent source for potassium and a range of B vitamins

Lentils

- Fiber (lowers cholesterol) and protein aid in stabilizing blood sugars
- Iron & folacin improve energy levels by increasing hemoglobin (with carries oxygen)
- Magnesium for heart protection
- Supplies tryptophan

Long cooking oatmeal

- As effective in lowering cholesterol as the two leading prescription medications
- Both soluble and insoluble fiber (5 grams per serving) particularly beta-glucan
- Impressive levels of iron, manganese, copper, folacin, vitamin E & zinc

- Improves immune system function

Organic green tea

- Great source of antioxidants, polyphenols, EGCG
- Increase your metabolism
- Lowers blood pressure and protects the heart

Organic miso

- Improves bone health, immune system function & blood vessels
- Reduces harmful blood acidity to prevent cellular damage from environmental toxins
- Contains many cell-strengthening minerals with zinc, manganese & copper

Pink grapefruit

- High in antioxidants like beta carotene & vitamin C
- Soluble fiber to help lower cholesterol
- Potassium to help lower blood pressure
- Consult your health care professional before taking if on any medications or doing a detoxification program

Pomegranate

- High concentration of potassium, high fiber, vitamin C and niacin content
- Its natural juice has three times the antioxidant ability compared to the same amount of red wine

Radicchio

- Improves heart and memory function
- Lycopene and anthocyanins lower risk for some cancers
- Supports urinary tract health
- Great source of potassium

Red & Yellow peppers

- Packed with powerful antioxidants such as vitamin C & beta carotene which help neutralize free-radical damage & reduce inflammation
- Lutein, zeaxanthin protect against macular degeneration

Sea vegetables/seaweed/algae

- Boost the immune system
- Detoxify heavy metals & pesticides with a broad range of minerals
- Alkalizes an acidic environment

Sardines

- High in protein, B vitamins, calcium and iron
- High in beneficial omega 3 fatty acids

Spinach

- Boasts 13 different flavonoid compounds
- High in vitamin K which is important for maintaining bone health
- Heart healthy nutrients: folacin, beta carotene, calcium, iron, magnesium & fiber

Tomatoes

- Lycopene (a phytonutrient) protects DNA inside white blood cells
- Vitamin C, vitamin E & beta carotene all significant antioxidants against a growing list of cancers & heart disease

Walnuts

- Healthy monounsaturated fats & omega 3 fatty acids
- Polyphenolic compounds like ellagic acid and gallic acid protects LDL cholesterol against free-radical damage
- Potassium, iron, vitamin E, B vitamins (Niacin, Thiamine, Riboflavin & B6) as well as arginine all which help improve blood pressure

Wild mushrooms (especially Shiitake & Crimini)

- Strengthens the immune system to fight infection with lentinan
- Helps protect your heart by reducing cholesterol levels with its compound eritadenine
- Phytonutrient protection against breast cancer

Wild salmon

- EPA omega 3 fatty acids reduces inflammation and improves blood flow
- Vitamin B12, Niacin, Thiamine & Riboflavin are improved energy B vitamins and reduce homocysteine levels (a marker in heart disease)

As you can see from my list, I place a lot of value on foods that have the highest positive impact on total health. These are natural wholesome foods. I have selected not only the best food choices to nourish your entire body; but foods that are both familiar and easy to acquire. In addition to my top foods for health, I can't forget to tell you about some truly fantastic-for-you herbs/spices. And remember as with food, fresh is always best and the same applies with spices & herbs.

Sweet	Savory
<p>Cinnamon Aids in stabilizing blood sugar and improving blood flow.</p>	<p>Turmeric Potent volatile oils are anti-inflammatory agents.</p>
<p>Ginger Antioxidant effects and supports gut health in many ways.</p>	<p>Rosemary Anti-inflammatory compounds & improves circulation.</p>
<p>Clove A natural anti-bacterial and contain eugenol which protects body from environmental pollutants and toxicity.</p>	<p>Cilantro An anti-microbial, raises HDL levels, alkaline-greens & exceptional phytonutrient content.</p>
<p>Peppermint leaf Soothes your stomach, acts as a natural anti-bacterial & powerful antioxidant.</p>	<p>Cayenne pepper Fights inflammation, reduces pain with capsaicin, boosts immunity & improves respiratory function.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Vanilla</p> <p>Contains tryptophan which will boost serotonin levels and improve your mood.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Sage</p> <p>Antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and is an outstanding memory enhancer.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Basil</p> <p>Orientin & vicenin are water soluble flavonoids that protect chromosomes from radiation and oxygen-based damage.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Thyme</p> <p>Fights bacteria and fungus with: carvacrol, borneol, geraniol & thymol and contains a variety of flavonoids.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Oregano</p> <p>Thymol & carvacrol both inhibit growth of bacteria; it also binds to bile-salts and cancer-causing toxins in the colon & is a powerful antioxidant.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Cumin seeds</p> <p>Iron, detoxification & anti-carcinogenic properties.</p>

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