

Does What You Eat Really Matter? Let's take a look at a few common foods and how they benefit our body.

Apples

An apple a day keeps the doctor away. This age old saying holds more truth than many people give credit. Apples are profoundly detoxifying, especially for the digestive system. They contain pectin, a soluble fiber that helps to promote peristalsis, the wave like motion in the colon that aids in elimination. The enzymes in apples help in the digestive process. Apples have been shown to reduce cholesterol, mild inflammation, improve energy levels, and strengthen the immune system. They are high in vitamin A, C, folic acid, calcium and magnesium.

Beans and Legumes

An entire family of colorful and nutritious beans await your appetite. Red, green, brown, black, chickpea, adzuki, black-eyed, butterbean, and pinto. With such a wide variety to choose from, not a day should go by that these food treasures aren't incorporated into your diet. Many beans, especially soybeans, exhibit phyto-estrogen properties having a stabilizing effect on PMS and menopausal symptoms. Beans are a good source of carbohydrates as their sugars are released slowly and have a stabilizing effect on blood sugar levels. Beans are high in B vitamins, improve intestinal health, can lower the risk of breast cancer, alleviate kidney stones (chick peas) and even relieve the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis.

Broccoli

Broccoli is a powerhouse of antioxidants and has unusually high protein content. Especially high in vitamin A, C, B vitamins, iron, and zinc, broccoli has been recognized by medical authorities as a major force in combating bowel cancer. Very protective of the immune system and rich in fiber for cleansing and purifying, broccoli also has shown the ability to detoxify the digestive system and liver, improves skin tone, and metabolize fats into energy.

Cabbage

Red, green, or white, all cabbages are powerful antioxidants and are believed to have cancer fighting properties. Green cabbage however possesses the highest concentration of these nutrients. Cabbage has been used warmed as a poultice for various ailments in the past. Juicing a head of cabbage has been shown to heal ulcers. Cabbage contains potassium, phosphorous, iodine (though not as high as pears), vitamins A, C, and E. Cabbage helps boost the immune system, fights bacteria.

Cabbage juice has been traditionally used as a hangover cure probably because it is an effective liver cleanser. Choose green cabbage that has a firm center and dark outer leaves where most of the nutrition is found. Enjoy it raw in salads and slaws, or lightly steamed for 4 to 6 minutes.

Carrots

No healthy food list would be complete without the humble carrot. It not only cleanses, but regulates imbalances within the body. Hundreds of thousands of stories have been told of the

power of carrots in healing everything from skin maladies, liver disorders, and cancer. While an apple a day is said to keep the doctor away, we should add a few carrots for good measure. Carrots are a store of beta-carotene, which the body converts to vitamin A, which we know boosts the immune system.

Carrots also build strong teeth, hair, and bones and also have a healing effect on the skin. Carrots have long been believed to benefit eyesight. Although carrots contain natural sugars, they are released slowly into the body. Carrots are best eaten raw, lightly steamed and in fresh juice. When drinking carrot juice, it is advised to sip slowly and swish each mouth full of juice to combine with the mouth digestive juices. This will prevent any sugar rush when consuming the carrot juice without the fiber.

Pears

Like apples, pears are high in soluble fiber promoting a healthy colon. But pears in particular have a high iodine content, which can aid persons with hypothyroid function. The fiber in pears has also been shown to lower cholesterol levels. Pears are high in beta-carotene, vitamin C, Folic Acid, Calcium, Magnesium, and Iodine. Pears also help cleanse the digestive system, boost the immune system, and improve energy levels.

Tomatoes

Tomatoes are actually classified as a fruit, even though we generally regard them as vegetables and prepare them as such. Tomatoes are a predominate food in the Mediterranean diet, renowned for its low incidence of heart disease.

Tomatoes are rich in the anti-oxidant vitamins A, C, E and Zinc, making them extremely powerful foods in strengthening the immune system, lowering the risk of cataracts, heart disease and stroke. Lycopene, an antioxidant found in cooked tomatoes, may be useful in the prevention of prostate cancer. Tomatoes can help thin the blood, reduce cancer risk, improve digestion and reduce liver inflammation

Seeds

Sesame, pumpkin, flax and sunflower seeds are rich in the essential fatty acids, Omega 3 and 6. Both must be supplied through diet, as the body does not manufacture these nutrients that are vital to our health.

They are responsible for the regeneration of healthy cells and protect the heart against abnormal clotting. They can protect against certain cancers, improve the symptoms of various arthritic conditions, reduce risk of heart disease, build healthy cells, cancer protector, promote wound healing, prevent constipations, cleanse digestive system and improve prostate health.

Yams and Sweet Potatoes

Both yams and sweet potatoes have been shown to prevent anemia, promote healthy digestion, reduce the risk of cancer, stroke, and heart disease, can help alleviate PMS and menopause symptoms, improve immune system, and give bursts of energy. While sweet potatoes and yams are very similar in their nutritious properties, yams have a particular beneficial effect on female

hormones as they stabilize estrogen levels. Sweet potatoes are full of antioxidants, vitamin A, C, E, and the mineral zinc. The darker orange color they contain, the more antioxidants are present.

They are the best low fat source of vitamin E, contain magnesium, calcium, potassium, and phosphorus for strong bones, teeth, healthy blood cells, supporting the nervous system, heart, kidneys, muscles, and lowering blood pressure. Next time you reach for the “sweet potato” make sure you pick the one best suited for you.

Note: sweet potatoes will have orange colored flesh and resemble more of a potato while the yam has a very tough skin like a bark and won't have the oval/round shape of a standard potato.

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