

health-protecting flavonoid anthocyanin. Adding berries to the diet may even help slow the decline in brain function that can occur with aging. Try adding berries to cereal in the morning.

Cruciferous vegetables

Cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, cabbage and Brussels sprouts are full of valuable nutrients. At the top of the list is a compound called sulforaphane, an enzyme in the body that detoxifies carcinogens before they damage cells. It may help to lower your risk of getting cancer. Cruciferous vegetables have the ability to stop the growth of cancer cells in the breast, uterine lining (endometrium), lung, colon, liver and cervix, and they are particularly effective in preventing breast cancer development in post-menopausal women. As cruciferous vegetable intake goes up 20 percent in a population, cancer rates drop 40 percent. In addition, isothiocyanates from cruciferous vegetables help the body transform estrogen and other hormones into forms that are more easily excreted from the body. Diets rich in cruciferous and dark yellow veggies also may help to protect against cardiovascular disease. Other important nutrients include vitamin C, beta carotene and potassium.

Nuts

Adding nuts such as pecans, almonds and walnuts to your diet can lead to a reduction in LDL cholesterol (bad cholesterol) and a reduction in the risk of coronary heart disease. Nuts also can increase HDL (the good cholesterol). Nuts have good anti-oxidants, which can help prevent aging and chronic diseases. Although nuts are high in calories and fat, they have heart-healthy fat that can help increase the feeling of fullness and actually reduce the risk of diabetes.



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Superfoods *for Women*



You may have heard about superfoods. You may even know superfoods can be good for you.

But do you know why?

Superfoods provide a host of benefits to help us live longer, healthier lives. They are high in phytonutrients, chemicals that occur naturally in food. They protect against cancer, diabetes, heart disease and hypertension and may also boost your immune function and perhaps lower your risk for infection.

Since they are available at local supermarkets, easy to grow in a garden, and found at many restaurants, superfoods can easily be added to your daily diet.

Here are 10 superfoods that offer a good start to a balanced diet for women:

Green leafy vegetables

These are one of nature's best sources of folate – a B vitamin that prevents birth defects, heart disease, dementia and colon cancer (the third most common cause of cancer in women). Folate also prevents vision loss and protects skin and bones. Another compound, called lutein, which is found in green leafy vegetables, helps prevent macular degeneration, a leading cause of age-related vision loss. Lutein also can help prevent cataracts and it helps protect your skin from the damaging effects of sun exposure. It appears lutein protects the fats in the top layer of skin, preventing dehydration, roughness and possibly even wrinkles. Green leafy vegetables also are an excellent source of vitamin K, a nutrient essential for bone development.

Dairy products

Calcium is necessary for proper bone development and to reduce the risk of osteoporosis. It is also needed for muscle contraction, blood clotting and making sure your nervous system works well. Milk and dairy products are excellent sources of calcium and they provide eight additional essential nutrients, including protein, potassium, phosphorus, vitamins A, vitamin D, vitamin B-12, riboflavin and niacin. Milk and milk products help build strong bones, teeth and muscles. Research shows that when cutting calories to lose weight, three servings of milk, cheese or yogurt each day help people burn more fat and lose more weight than just cutting calories alone. Dairy foods also can reduce the risk of kidney stones and PMS.

Lean red meat

Iron is necessary for transporting oxygen through the blood to the tissues. We need iron in all of our body tissues, including the brain, muscles, heart and liver. It helps to convert food to energy for normal cell activities. A healthy diet should include up to 6 ounces of meat protein a day or equivalents such as eggs, nuts or legumes. Lean meat is high in iron, zinc and niacin. Lean beef is an excellent source of protein, as well. It also is a good source of vitamin B-6 and selenium and the best source of vitamin B-12.

Whole grains

A diet rich in whole grains provides fiber, vitamin E, folic acid, thiamin, riboflavin, iron, magnesium and zinc. These are necessary for a healthy heart and for building muscle. The types of fiber and complex carbohydrates in whole grains also maintain our blood sugar level, which can reduce abdominal fat and help keep our waistlines smaller.

Green tea

Green tea has many biological functions. The secret of green tea lies in the fact it is rich in

catechin polyphenols, particularly epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG). EGCG is a powerful anti-oxidant. In addition to inhibiting the growth of cancer cells, it kills cancer cells without harming healthy tissue. As an anti-oxidant, it can help with diseases such as arthritis and it kills antibiotic-resistant bacteria. It also lowers LDL cholesterol levels and inhibits the abnormal formation of blood clots. It helps with weight control by inhibiting fat absorption in the intestinal tract and increases energy expenditure without increasing heart rate.

Orange fruits and vegetables

Beta carotene in orange vegetables and fruits such as sweet potatoes, squash, pumpkins, carrots, mangos, oranges and papayas is an anti-oxidant that helps preserve healthy skin cells and prevent sun damage. Beta carotene is essential for healthy skin and the lining of membranes in the mouth, throat, lungs, stomach, intestines, urinary tract and the reproductive tract. It also repairs damaged skin cells and is necessary for night vision. Other nutrients in orange fruits and vegetables are manganese, copper, fiber, vitamin B-6, potassium and iron.

Seafood

Seafood and fatty fish have omega-3 fatty acids that can benefit the cardiovascular, circulatory and immune systems. Omega-3 fatty acids are potent anti-inflammatory foods that can help reduce the risk of cancer, high triglyceride (blood fat) levels, aches and pains and certain kinds of arthritis. The American Heart Association recommends everyone eat fish twice a week.

Berries and cherries

Berries have many different compounds that have anti-oxidant properties, including vitamin C. Vitamin C helps keep our skin firm by building collagen. The violet, blue and red colors in berries and cherries are responsible for their healthful properties. Red and blue berries are full of the