

Super Food — Top Ten list

It is always best to work with nature. While our supplementation program is designed to take advantage of the best of nature, it still makes good sense to back it up with these readily available super foods. The list can be greatly expanded but this is a good start. Be certain to add a minimum of three items to your daily food program.

Apples: While different varieties of apples have different phytonutrients, they all have tons of antioxidants, including flavonoids, polyphenols, plus fiber. (Cinnamon is also considered by many to be a super food in its own right: get a double whammy by slicing up an apple and adding cinnamon.)

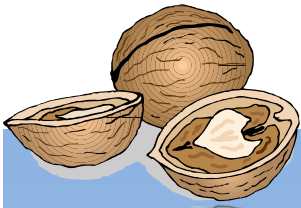
Avocados: Avocados have the same thing going for them that olive oil does: healthy monounsaturated fatty acids. These are the "good fats," and they appear to lower LDL (bad) cholesterol levels, and raise HDL (good) cholesterol levels: Fiber, potassium, magnesium, folate and antioxidants up the ante. And research shows that avocado helps the body absorb more nutrients from other foods, i.e. pump up the tomato in the same salad, for instance.

Beans: They haven't gotten the same media buzz as blueberries, but some beans have even more health-promoting antioxidants. They also have as much cholesterol-lowering fiber as oats, and lots of lean protein. All of that is good for your heart. They also are rich in B vitamins and potassium. This category includes both dried and green beans.

Blueberries: Frozen do the trick as well as fresh, and they're easier to find in winter. For such tiny fruits, they deliver a huge wallop of antioxidants of many kinds, including anthocyanins and other polyphenols, and carotenoids. They also have fiber, folic acid and vitamins C and E. And they taste good with very few calories.

Dark chocolate: The magic word here is flavonoids, the same kinds of antioxidants that make tea so potent a health brew. Research shows flavonoids have a role in helping lower blood pressure and in keeping your arteries from clogging -- good news for your heart. Only dark chocolate does the trick, not milk or white. And the more cocoa solids the better — look for the percentage on the label.

Kiwis: Vitamin C, vitamin C, vitamin C -- kiwis are loaded in this antioxidant, which also makes oranges a superfood. Kiwis rival bananas in potassium, pound



for pound. And flavonoid antioxidants abound in the skin, which is edible but best if you rub the fuzzy stuff off first.

Oats: The king of fiber, oats also delivers protein, potassium, magnesium and other minerals, and phytonutrients, including antioxidants. Their cholesterol-lowering powers are well known, and all that fiber is also believed to help stabilize blood sugar. Oats' combination of nutrients appears to have more healthy effects than if each nutrient were consumed separately – this also appears to be true of all whole grains. Bonus: they're inexpensive.

Spinach: What doesn't spinach have? It's loaded with lutein (great for eyes) and many other carotenoids, which are healthful antioxidants; plus other antioxidants like coenzyme Q, in serious doses; plus several B vitamins plus C and E; plus iron and other minerals; plus betaine, a vitamin-like nutrient research suggests is good for your heart. And with almost no calories, you can eat as much as you want. Also good for similar reasons: kale, chard and other dark leafy greens.

Walnuts: All nuts have been reconfirmed as good-for-you foods, for their healthy fats and micronutrients. A few go a long way, though, as they are calorie bombs. Walnuts' main claim to stardom is their omega-3 fatty acids, which fight heart disease. Other goodies: plant sterols, which lower cholesterol, and lots of antioxidants.

Yogurt: A well know nutritionists says that if she could pick only two superfoods, they would be yogurt and tea, because their health-giving attributes. Yogurt's claim to fame is live cultures, also called probiotics or beneficial bacteria. They are what turn milk into yogurt (but some commercial yogurts are heated to kill the cultures after they do their work, so be sure to read the label). In your gut, they fight bad bacteria, aid digestion, help metabolize food and generally tune your system up. Yogurt also is a good source of calcium and protein.

Super Food Glossary of terms

The language of superfoods can be confusing, because many of the terms for nutrients overlap. Here is a basic glossary:

Antioxidants: An umbrella name for many substances that retard the body's normal process of oxidation, meaning a reaction to oxygen that releases "free radicals" that damage cells and break the body down. Digestion releases free radicals from food. Antioxidants help prevent this and also are thought to



destroy free radicals and slow oxidation, reducing allergies, heart disease, cancer and aging effects. Dozens of antioxidant nutrients have been identified so far, and there are likely many more. Many vitamins have antioxidant effects, including A (which is a carotene), C and E.

Flavonoids: These are the best-known antioxidants -- think tea and dark chocolate -- among a group called polyphenols. You also see the word flavonol, which is a subgroup of flavonoids. Relatives are anthocyanins (which give blueberries their fame).

Carotenoids: These are the pigments that protect dark green, yellow, orange and red fruits and vegetables from sun damage -- and they work as antioxidants in humans, too. Beta-carotene is the best known -- it's also called vitamin A. Other famous carotenoids -- there are dozens -- are lycopene and lutein.

Vitamins: Nutrients considered essential to health; a shortage of vitamins can create health problems.

Phytonutrients: Plant-derived compounds that are believed to improve your health, but aren't essential to your health. This includes many antioxidants.

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