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I hope you enjoy this book...

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You Really Are What You Eat

Recent dietary research has uncovered 14 different nutrient-dense foods that time and again promote good overall health. Coined “superfoods,” they tend to have fewer calories, higher levels of vitamins and minerals, and many disease-fighting antioxidants.

Beans (legumes), berries (especially blueberries), broccoli, green tea, nuts (especially walnuts), oranges, pumpkin, salmon, soy, spinach, tomatoes, turkey, whole grains and oats, and yogurt can all help stop and even reverse diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, Alzheimer’s, and some forms of cancer. And where one might have an effect on a certain part of the body, it can also affect the health of other body functions and performance, since the whole body is connected. With these 14 foods as the base of a balanced, solid diet, weight loss gimmicks and other fly-by-night programs can become a thing of the past in your life.

Conversely, the ill-effects of an unbalanced diet are several and varied. Low energy levels, mood swings, tired all the time, weight change, uncomfortable with body are just a few signs that your diet is unbalanced. An unbalanced diet can cause problems with maintenance of body tissues, growth and development, brain and nervous system function, as well as problems with bone and muscle systems.

Symptoms of malnutrition include lack of energy, irritability, a weakened immune system leading to frequent colds or allergies, and mineral depletion that can trigger a variety of health concerns including anemia.

And since the body is connected, realizing that an unhealthy body will result in an unhealthy spirit only makes sense. When we nourish our body with these superfoods and complement them with other nutrient-dense and healthy fresh foods, our spirit will be vitalized and healthy as a direct result.

Many modern diets based on prepackaged convenience foods are sorely lacking in many vitamins and minerals, which can affect our mental capacities as well, and cause irritability, confusion, and the feeling of ‘being in a fog’ all the time.

Superfoods can be the basis of a sound, healthy, nutritious solution to curing many of these ailments and more.



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Simply The Best

Prevention is Worth a Pound of Cure

It seems like everywhere you look, there's a new pill or medicine that will 'instantly cure' your sickness, disease or health issue. And while taking a pill to cure what ails you might be convenient and simple, maybe it's really time to sit down and take a good, long look at what you're feeding your body, or as it might be, not feeding your body. Are you truly giving your body the nutrients it needs to take care of itself? Most of us find when we take a look at what we've been eating that the choices we've been making in the name of convenience, simplicity, or saving time have actually been detrimental to our overall health – body, mind and spirit.

Our modern day diet largely consists of excessive consumption of starch, sugar, fried and fatty foods. As a result, diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, obesity, Alzheimer's and some cancers are becoming more and more common.

Healthy foods and good nutrition can not only help keep you fit, but treat disease as well. You may not even have to go to a health food store. You can purchase them right at your grocery store, or make a trip to your local farmer's market. And if you focus on basing a healthy, well-balanced diet on the 14 "Superfoods," the detrimental effects of these diseases can be slowed, stopped or even reversed.

And when you nourish your body physically with these nutrient-dense foods, your mental capacities increase, and your spiritual wellness is enhanced as well. In addition, since your spiritual health is optimal, it will shine through to the outside, and people will notice you're happy, calm, and that your stress levels have decreased dramatically.

So look for ways to cut the junk out of your daily eating and replace it with members of the Superfoods group. Your body, mind and spirit will all be healthier as a direct result.



Color Your Way to Daily Health

It's important that we eat plenty of different fruits and vegetables every day. Diets rich in fruits and vegetables may reduce the risk of cancer and other chronic diseases. Fruits and vegetables provide essential vitamins and minerals, fiber, and other substances that are important for good health. Most fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories and are filling.

You've probably heard about the 5 A Day for Better Health program. It provides easy ways to add more fruits and vegetables into your daily eating patterns. It's vital that we eat a wide variety of colorful orange/yellow, red, green, white, and blue/purple vegetables and fruit every day. By eating vegetables and fruit from each color group, you will benefit from the essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber that each color group has to offer alone and in combination.

There's several different yet simple ways to start incorporating vegetables and fruit into your familiar and favorite meals. You can begin your day with 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice, slice bananas or strawberries on top of your cereal, or have a salad with lunch and an apple for an afternoon snack. Include a vegetable with dinner and you already have about 5 cups of fruits and vegetables. You may even try adding a piece of fruit for a snack or an extra vegetable at dinner.

Don't be afraid to try something new to increase your vegetable and fruit intake. There are so many choices when selecting fruits and vegetables. Kiwifruit, asparagus, and mango may become your new favorite. Keep things fresh and interesting by combining fruits and vegetables of different flavors and colors, like red grapes with pineapple chunks, or cucumbers and red peppers.

Get in the habit of keeping fruits and vegetables visible and easily accessible – you'll tend to eat them more. Store cut and cleaned produce at eye-level in the refrigerator, or keep a big colorful bowl of fruit on the table.

Super Foods for Super Weight Loss

Experts say there are two basic categories of foods that can be considered "keeping it off superfoods" because they fill your tummy without piling on the calories: fruits and vegetables. And the nutrient that gives fruits and vegetables that 'staying power?' Fiber. So, if fruits and vegetables are the "keeping-it-off superfood groups," fiber may well be the "keeping-it-off super-nutrient." Protein is another super-nutrient. It's becoming more scientifically accepted that protein may help to curb appetite. Protein also offers staying power, and can slightly boost your metabolism in the process. But it's imperative that you choose your proteins wisely, because like all other foods, if you're eating more than your body needs, it'll show up on the scale as a gain, instead of a loss.

The following superfoods are smart, low-calorie choices that will benefit your weight loss efforts:
Green Tea - Researchers suspect that the catechins (helpful phytochemicals) in green tea may trigger weight loss by stimulating the body to burn calories and mildly decrease body fat. So indulge in either a hot cup or a nice tall iced glass of green tea.

Broth- or tomato-based soup – Soups can help reduce hunger before meals and increase your feeling of fullness.

Low-calorie green salads - Having a low-calorie salad – which is not defined as one that's loaded with croutons, high fat dressings, and cheese - as a first course can help you feel full, thereby reducing how much you eat with your main course. Wisely choose your ingredients, and its high fiber content can be the key to helping you fight cravings later in the day.

Yogurt – Including dairy products as part of your healthy diet may promote your weight loss efforts. Choosing a light yogurt may help you fight off hunger pangs due to its combination of protein and carbohydrate.

Beans – A great combination of fiber and protein, beans help you feel full longer, which means they may work to curb your between-meal appetite.

Water – Water is your body's lifeblood, and you should be drinking it through your day. It's a great no-calorie beverage, and you can get it by drinking unsweetened tea, flavored unsweetened mineral water, regular water with lime or lemon, or even in your cucumber. In addition to helping flush toxins from the body, it can also help you feel full. So when those hunger pangs strike, try drinking a glass of water before grabbing that snack.

High-Fiber, Whole-Grain Cereal - Whole grains in general help boost fiber and the nutritional value of your meal. One of the easiest ways to give your daily diet a whole-grain boost is to have a bowl of higher-fiber whole-grain cereal as breakfast or a snack.

Superfoods that Squash Stress

Life has a way of getting the best of us some days. Whether it's working too many hours, shuffling your kids all over town for their activities, taking care of your household, or dealing with personal or family matters, stress can take its toll on you physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. But there are simple steps you can take to combat stress, starting with the foods you eat.

Avoiding caffeine and alcohol is a good start when life's particularly stressful. Stimulants and depressants like these can both zap your energy and rob you of the fuel you need to successfully cope with tension. Sugary foods should also be avoided as well, as they cause your blood sugar levels to spike then dip rapidly, which can in turn make your energy levels spike and dip at the same rate.

However, there are several superfoods out there that provide you with the energy and nutrition your body needs to keep stress in check

Asparagus, which is high in folic acid, can help level out your moods. Folic acid and vitamin B are key players in producing serotonin, a chemical that gets you into a good mood.

And though we may hear negative things regarding red meat, it's actually a wise dinner option for a stressed-out family. Beef's high levels of iron, zinc and B vitamins not only help get you into a good mood, but help you stay there as well. Your local butcher can help you select lean cuts for the healthiest options

Milk really does a body good. Chock full of calcium, protein, antioxidants, and vitamins B2 and B12, it helps strengthen bones and promotes healthy cell regeneration. Paired with a healthy whole-grain cereal choice in the morning, low-fat milk is a great way to start your day and arm yourself to do battle with the stressors that await you. Cottage cheese is also another great dairy choice, and when coupled with a fruit that's high in vitamin C, it helps the body battle free radicals that run rampant during your most stressed periods.

Almonds are also an awesome choice when it comes to arming yourself against stress. They're high in magnesium, zinc, as well as vitamins B2, C, and E and unsaturated fats, all which are great warriors against free radicals, which have been shown to cause cancers and heart disease.

Superfoods for your Brain

We've all had days when we didn't feel like we were 'on our game.' And as we age, both our bodies and our brains grow old as well. By making smart food choices though, we can preserve our precious gray matter longer and improve brain function. Here are some brainy choices for keeping our noggins in tip-top shape.

Blueberries have been shown to shield the brain from stress, dementia, and Alzheimer's disease. Research has also shown that diets rich in blueberries significantly improved both the learning capacity and motor skills.

Avocados, though considered a 'fatty fruit,' contribute to healthy blood flow and decreased blood pressure, lessening the chances of developing hypertension, which can lead to a stroke. Deep-water fish, such as salmon is a wise, freshwater fish choice. It's abundant in omega-3 essential fatty acids, which are essential for healthy brain function.

Nuts and seeds are good sources of vitamin E, an important vitamin needed by your brain to stave off declining cognitive functions. Cashews, peanuts, walnuts, sunflower and sesame seeds and almonds are all great choices.

Whole-grain breads, brown rice, and oatmeal also contribute to a healthy brain by reducing the risk for cardiac disease. By promoting a healthy heart and improved blood flow, the brain is sure to thrive via excellent oxygen and nutrient delivery through the bloodstream. Complex carbohydrates also supply the brain with a steady stream of glucose that enhances brain function. It's important to avoid simple carbohydrates often found in junk food because the glucose gives the brain a short-lived sugar high, often followed by a crash that makes you feel hungry and tired.

Freshly brewed tea also has potent antioxidants, especially the class known as catechines, which also promotes healthy blood flow. Since black teas do contain caffeine it's important to use it sensibly. Dark chocolate has powerful antioxidant properties, contains several natural stimulants, which enhance focus and concentration, and encourages the production of endorphins, which helps improve mood. Again, moderation is the key.

Superfoods that Help Heartburn

Heartburn and indigestion make millions of people miserable. Continuous digestive problems can be a symptom of overeating, bad food choices or something more serious. Thankfully simple changes in the foods you eat can provide relief.

A number of foods can trigger heartburn or indigestion by relaxing the band of muscles at the end of your esophagus so it can't keep out stomach acid. By avoiding spicy foods with black pepper or chili powder, garlic and raw onions, citrus foods like tomatoes, oranges, and grapefruit, fried or fatty foods, alcohol or anything with caffeine such as coffee, tea, soft drinks, heartburn and indigestion can be greatly lessened or avoided.

For overall healthy digestion and to minimize acid reflux, make sure you get plenty of fiber from a variety of vegetables, non-citrus fruits, and whole grains. Drink enough fluids to help your body absorb important nutrients and lubricate food waste, and use low-fat methods when cooking. Try drinking herbal chamomile tea after dinner or before bedtime, as it's believed to have a calming effect on the stomach. Smaller but more frequent meals can also help decrease heartburn and indigestion episodes. Be sure to eat your meals and snacks in a calm, relaxed atmosphere where there's little if any noise or distractions. Wear properly fitting clothing that isn't tight in the waist and abdominal area, and don't lie down immediately after eating a meal.

Make your morning meal oatmeal. It's high in fiber, low in saturated fat and cholesterol and when combined with skim milk, gives you a calcium-charged boost to your day. By adding blueberries or raisins you'll be adding some extra iron and potassium into the mix for a well-balanced meal.

You can't beat turkey if you want a lean, nutrient-packed protein source that'll be easy on your stomach. Turkey is high in niacin, which helps lower cholesterol levels in the blood. Chicken without the skin is also a terrific low-fat source of protein. Both are easy to cook either indoors or out.

Apples and grapes are low in saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium, and are a great non-citrus fruit choice for vitamin C and fiber.

Superfoods to Stomp out a Cold

Not only do healthy, nutrient-dense foods nourish your body and help the cells grow and reproduce, they also help arm your body's defenses to ward off attacks from germs that cause colds. Low-fat meats, whole grains, fruits, vegetables and whole grains all play a part in preparing your body to do battle.

Another important component of your anti-cold defense system is water. When your body is dehydrated, it's at an increased risk of germs latching on and not letting go. So be sure to drink plenty of water and decaffeinated drinks to help your body stay hydrated and ready.

Just one cup of yogurt a day may work to keep the gastrointestinal track healthier, which can help ward off colds. It has to be yogurt with live cultures, as this is the key ingredient that helps keep the GI track ready to rumble. And an added bonus to eating yogurt - recent studies suggest regular dairy consumption helps you lose weight or maintain a healthy weight.

Garlic contains allicin, an antibiotic that has been shown to prevent complications from a cold in some research. Garlic can be added to many of your favorite dishes to spice them up and help you suit up to do battle against cold germs.

It's been said an apple a day keeps the doctor away. Well, so can an orange. One orange a day provides your recommended daily allowance of vitamin C. Oranges are also abundant in flavonoids, which helps your body's cells regenerate and stay healthy and strong. Green bell peppers are the vegetable family's best vitamin C source. Add them to a salad, or simply slice one up and eat it raw. Flavonoids are also found in peppers. You may even want to prepare a green pepper dip seasoned with garlic for an added germ-kicking effect.

Lean ground beef, especially when prepared with a bit of garlic, can maintain cell health and fight off illness. It's a good source of protein, selenium and zinc, and when eaten with a bit of tomato, is a great defense during cold season.

Superfoods for Fighting the Flu

Breakouts of the flu are responsible for millions of lost hours at both work and home each year, not to mention many miserable days trying to recover. If you're wondering what you can do to naturally boost your immunity and prepare your body's defenses, study the foods you're eating, look at your family's meals, and make the changes needed to ensure everyone is eating a well-balanced diet abundant in nutrient-dense fruits and vegetables, low-fat proteins, and complex carbohydrates. Black currants are even richer in vitamin C than oranges, containing approximately three times the recommended daily intake for adults. It's imperative that you get plenty of vitamin C since it helps prevent infections and helps keep the immune system healthy.

Pork has high levels of zinc and selenium, both of which help keep your immune system strong. It's also one of the best sources of B vitamins and contains only a little more total fat than beef. So be sure to include lots of pork entrees in your menu planning.

Mix up your morning breakfast with a glass of grapefruit juice instead of orange juice for a vitamin C-rich drink that's both sweet and tart. However, you should check with your doctor if you're on certain medications for blood pressure, AIDS, anxiety, or hay fever, as mixing grapefruit juice with certain drugs can lead to dangerous toxicity.

Brussel sprouts are a great vegetable source of vitamin C, are high in fiber and contain lots of folate as well. They improve anticarcinogenic glucosinolates, which have important cancer-fighting properties. They're a great addition in a stew to provide lots of fl-busting nutrients.

Yogurt that includes live cultures has a positive effect on your GI tract, and as a result, helps the body purge the germs from the body more quickly and effectively and fight the flu. You want your yogurt to contain the active culture *L. acidophilus*, which is also helpful in fighting off yeast infections.

Potatoes are one of the most affordable sources of vitamin C, and nicely complement any entrée with their high levels of potassium and fiber. The skin contains the most fiber and the flesh just under the skin contains the most vitamin C. Fresh potatoes are the best source of vitamin C. Be careful of how you choose to prepare them, as soaking them in water robs them of their germ-busting vitamin C.

Whole wheat pasta is also rich in niacin, fiber, and iron. Its complex carbohydrates are an essential part of a healthy diet that will keep your immune system strong. Simply substitute recipes calling for traditional pasta with the whole wheat variety instead for a delicious and nutritious twist on your favorite pasta dishes.

Superfoods for Super Bones

Many people believe that the primary cause of osteoporosis is the lack of calcium in their diet. However, in the overall picture, calcium is only a small piece of the puzzle. Though calcium supplements can certainly help, there are other dietary concerns that need to be examined.

Actually, the primary dietary cause of osteoporosis is the eating foods that are highly acidic in nature, such as refined white sugar, refined white flour, high-fructose corn syrup, soft drinks, cookies, candies, sweets, desserts, and anything containing sweeteners. The over-consumption of these products causes the pH level in your blood to become very acidic. In an attempt to counterbalance this, your body reaches out for any calcium and magnesium it can find, and releases those into your bloodstream in an attempt to keep the pH level at a healthy balance.

Therefore, with every soft drink, candy, cake and goodie you indulge in, you are robbing your skeleton of its bone density. The calcium and magnesium the body harvests in an attempt to counteract this acidic environment gets passed through your kidneys, where it can also contribute to kidney stones and exits your body through your urine. To prevent losing your bone mass to dietary causes, simply avoid consuming any white flour, processed sugars, added sugars, soft drinks, sweets, candies, breads, or any other ingredients that are made with refined carbohydrates.

In addition, certain superfoods, like broccoli, cabbage, celery and other dark green leafy vegetables help keep the pH balance in a healthy equilibrium. You need to get plenty of calcium and magnesium from healthy sources such as organic, plant-based vitamins. You also need to supplement your diet with various sea vegetables, which are naturally alkaline. Those include seaweed, kelp, and many others. Sprouts are also an awesome superfood choice.

Superfoods that have your Heart in Mind

Heart disease is number one killer among both men and women in the United States. And though we all realize that eating nutrient-dense healthy foods help reduce the risk, we may not know which foods are the best choices to battle this deadly disease head on.

The key is stepping up fiber and choosing unsaturated fats. Eating unsaturated fats, like omega-3 fatty acids and olive oil, can help to reduce triglycerides. And a diet rich in soluble fiber, which is often found in legumes and some fruits and vegetables, helps to decrease LDL cholesterol levels.

Sardines are an awesome source of omega-3 fatty acids, along with calcium and niacin. You can prepare fresh ones on the grill, or canned sardines work great in salads or sandwiches. Mackerel is another excellent source of omega-3s, and is full of selenium, which is an antioxidant mineral which may help protect the body from heart disease and cancer. A great way to get omega-3s on the go is by grabbing a handful of walnuts for an afternoon snack. Add some to your green salad, or give chicken salad a nutrition boost by adding ground walnuts.

Kidney beans are an affordable source of high fiber, are low fat, and have no cholesterol. Add them to salads and chili, as they truly are almost a perfect health food. Since canned varieties tend to be higher in sodium, try to use the dried varieties whenever possible.

Whole-grain barley is rich in soluble fiber and insoluble fiber, which is good for combating constipation. It's also a good protein source and has a good supply of iron and minerals. Choose whole-grain barley cereals, or substitute whole-grain barley for rice and pasta side dishes once a week.

Oatmeal is a great way to boost your fiber content early in the morning, and it also has a low glycemic index, which helps to provide lasting energy stave off hunger. Choose rolled oats, and add some raisins, apples, and honey for flavor. Instant oatmeal isn't a healthy option as it's usually loaded with sugar.

Superfoods that Fight Cancer

As the nation's second most deadly disease, cancer brings with it several risk factors. Therefore, it's logical that we take a good look at the foods we're eating, and start introducing nutrient-rich foods that are known to help reduce the cancer risk. A diet rich in fiber, vegetables, and fruits, including juices made from 100 percent fruit juice, can make a big difference in your cancer risk.

Foods rich in phytochemicals which are found in beans and cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, brussels sprouts, and kale are strong choices. So are dark green leafy vegetables like spinach, romaine lettuce, and collard greens, which are packed with fiber, lutein, and carotenoids - all cancer-fighting substances. Focus on choosing foods that have abundant amounts of vitamins C, E, and A, all antioxidants themselves. These help protect you from cancer by preventing the growth of free radicals in your body.

Tomatoes are an awesome cancer-fighting superfood. Not only do tomatoes contain lycopene, the antioxidant phytochemical that also helps prevent heart disease, but they're a good source of vitamins A, C, and E, all which do battle against cancer-causing free radicals. Add them to your salad or use as a topping on your homemade pizza. They're also a great way of adding some zest to your favorite sandwich.

Watermelon is also stuffed full of antioxidants, and includes about 80 percent of your daily vitamin C requirement. It is also a great source of vitamin A, or beta carotene. And like tomatoes, it also contains lycopene.

Cabbage is a cruciferous vegetable, which help reduce the risk of colon and rectal cancer. Plus cabbage is rich in fiber and has almost 50 percent of daily requirement of vitamin C, making it a well-rounded superfood with cancer-fighting power. Carrots are also a wonderful source of fiber and beta carotene, and they have about three times the daily requirement of vitamin A.

Did you know that one-quarter cup of kidney beans has the same amount of fiber and protein as two ounces of red meat? Whole wheat pasta is also a good source of fiber, and broccoli will tip the daily scales for your daily vitamin A and C needs. Toss them all together with your favorite low-fat Italian dressing for a simple dinner of cancer-fighting proportions.

Strawberries and blueberries are rich in vitamin C and fiber. They're quick and simple finger food, and easily be added to your favorite whole grain cereal oatmeal, or low-fat yogurt.

Superfoods for a Super Long Life

Recent research shows that specific chemicals in foods -- such as sulforaphane, a phytochemical in broccoli -- work with your genes to ratchet up your body's natural defense systems, helping to inactivate toxins and free radicals before they can do the damage that leads to cancer, cardiovascular disease, and even premature aging.

And the hope for the future is to be able to tell someone what diseases or maladies they are might be genetically predisposed to early on, so their diets can be focused accordingly. We'll know which ones to add, which ones to avoid, and be able to take a proactive role in preventing or deterring a genetic disease. In the meantime, many foods have been determined to pack a punch to the aging process.

Lycopene, the pigment that makes tomatoes red, also appears to reduce risk for cardiovascular disease, some cancers, and macular degeneration. It's also been associated in greater self-sufficiency in elderly adults. While fresh tomatoes have a good hit of lycopene, the most absorbable forms are found in cooked tomato products, such as spaghetti sauce and soup and prepared salsas. Pink grapefruit, guava, red bell peppers, and watermelon are also rich in lycopene.

Eating at least two cups of orange fruits like sweet potatoes, squash and carrots boosts intake of beta-carotene, which converts to vitamin A, essential for healthy skin and eyes, and which may also reduce the risk of some cancers, cardiovascular disease, and osteoporosis. Lutein and lycopene, also found in orange produce, also help reduce the risk of macular degeneration and may protect skin from sun damage and even reduce wrinkling as well. Mangos and cantaloupes are also beta-carotene endowed.

And if you don't do anything else to change your diet, eat your dark leafy greens. They have been showed to significantly reduce your risk for heart disease and may also save your eyesight. Dietary guidelines advise at least three cups of greens a week. Frozen or bagged is as good as fresh.

Don't forget the mental aging process either. The heart-healthy omega 3 fatty acids have also recently been shown to keep your brain sharp. A recent study found that a higher intake of fatty fish significantly reduced mental decline. If fresh fish isn't an option, go for canned tuna, salmon, and sardines.

Superfoods for Healthy Hair

We've all learned through the years that a well-balanced diet is healthy for our body and critical for optimal health and performance. Our hair is no different. A mixture of protein, complex carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals and iron are all required for healthy, strong hair.

Good hair nutrition begins with getting enough protein, which is the building block of your hair. Then you need complex carbohydrates to help assemble the proteins for hair growth. Other important vitamins and minerals include B complex, which is associated with energy production and building good hair and skin issues, folic acid, B12, and zinc.

Hair follicles can have low energy levels just like we do. Therefore, it's very important that you eat a high protein meal at the start of each day. Consider the following food choices for breakfast and the other daily meals in order to give your hair the healthiest opportunity to grow and thrive.

If you don't have high cholesterol, try eating red meat twice per week. It has the protein your hair needs, but also is full of B vitamins, iron and zinc, which are all important for healthy hair. Bacon is another great choice as it's also full of B vitamins, zinc and protein, but since it's also high calorie, it's not the best choice if you're also trying to lose weight. Eggs and egg whites are another great protein option, especially for vegetarians or those who cannot eat red meat or bacon due to dietary restrictions. Salmon is another great protein choice, and works great for breakfast, lunch or dinner. You'll find it's also full of B vitamins, including B12, and other vitamins and minerals.

Just be sure to keep in mind that you should also have complex carbohydrates, which feed you energy over a longer period of time than refined carbohydrates, with your protein source at meals. Brown short-grain rice is an ideal form. It's also a good source of B vitamins and some fiber. Whole grain choices complement your protein consumption by helping organize the proteins for the hair to utilize for optimal growth and health.

Superfoods that Fight Depression

We've all had the blues once in while. But when they happen on a more frequent basis, it becomes cause for concern. But there are ways to adjust your diet to help stabilize your mood. It's imperative to eat meals at regular intervals in order to keep your serotonin levels in check, a chemical in the brain that has a calming effect. Good nutrition is your best defense for managing depression.

Carbohydrates are linked to serotonin production and lack of carbohydrates may cause changes in your mood. Here are more food ideas to help you combat depression and kick those blues.

Rich in omega-3 fatty acids, salmon and mackerel are always a great choice for dinner. Omega-3 fatty acids also help prevent heart disease and stroke and may help prevent some cancers. Plus, salmon contains selenium, an important antioxidant mineral. Be sure to choose wild salmon at the grocery store or local fish market, since it contains more omegas than farmed, or Atlantic, salmon.

A recent study indicated that people who suffer from depression also have lower levels of the antioxidant vitamin E. So, though oil is high in fat and should be consumed in strict moderation, canola oil is rich in vitamin E. It's a healthier alternative for sautéing foods and vegetables.

Dark green vegetables like spinach and peas are high in folate, a key player in the production of serotonin. They're also an excellent source of vitamin C and fiber. Fresh is always the best option, as canned versions tend to have lower nutritional value. Legumes are also high in folate and protein and low in fat, and are an excellent option for those who are vegetarian or meat-restricted diets.

Chickpeas are rich in fiber, iron, and vitamin E. For a simple snack, combine a can of drained and rinsed chickpeas with some minced garlic, fresh lemon juice, and olive or canola oil in your blender or food processor. Add salt, pepper and other spices as you wish. The resulting hummus makes a healthy and hearty vegetable dip.

Chicken and turkey are both rich in vitamin B6, which plays a role in serotonin production in the body. They are both a good source of selenium and other vitamins and minerals, too.

And please, if you've been dealing with the symptoms of depression for a while, please contact your doctor to discuss available treatment options and medication that may be available to you.

Superfoods for Super Sex

Every aspect of a food - its color, shape, scent and texture – can make it sexy. In addition, certain foods contain substances that make us feel good by interacting with our hormones or stimulating our brain. Consider incorporating some of the following into your next candlelight dinner to help you and your partner get in the mood.

Oysters are a good source of minerals like selenium and zinc, and are also high in protein. A perfect appetizer to a beautiful meal – but be careful when purchasing, as some can have high levels of pollutants and PCB. If you're pregnant, oysters should be avoided.

Chocolate has been a symbol of love and lust for centuries due to theobromine, a stimulant to the brain that creates a pleasurable effect. Chocolate also contains antioxidants that may lower cancer and heart disease risk. However, chocolate is also very high in fat, so self-restraint should be exercised. Dark chocolates are usually lower in sugar, but higher in antioxidants and theobromine than milk chocolate.

Kiwi and papaya are colorful fruits have an alluring and interesting aspect about them that can help flip the switch. Loaded with antioxidants, tropical fruits help fend off heart disease and cancers. Kiwi actually has more vitamin C in it than an orange, and papaya is rich in beta-carotene and high in fiber.

Honey was thought in medieval times to sweeten the marriage when mixed into a drink. Bear in mind, however, it's still pretty high in sugar, so use sparingly.

Asparagus can also help get your partner in the mood. It's one of the few good sources of vitamin E and is a natural diuretic. Steaming is the best way to prepare them without losing nutrients, and they can easily be eaten by hand.

A good cup of coffee or tea after that romantic dinner stimulates the release of epinephrine, which contributes to stimulation in the body. It can also be found in dark chocolate. Just don't consume too much caffeine before bed, unless you plan on being awake all night long!

Superfoods for a Healthy Prostate

The prostate gland has a reputation as a health destroyer. Hypertrophy of the prostate gland, which affects nearly every elderly male, strangles the urethra. This troublesome condition makes urination difficult and increases the risk of bladder infections and kidney damage. However, there are many superfoods that may already be a part of your everyday diet that can help thwart the onset of prostate problems.

Tomatoes, watermelons, red grapefruit, papaya and red berries are all great sources of lycopene, a health-promoting plant pigment known for its cancer-battling ability. It also promotes a strong immune system and helps support prostate health in men. Though fresh are always an excellent option, the lycopene in cooked tomatoes is actually absorbed more readily by the body. It's also your ally in the battle against heart disease.

Quercetin, a flavonoid that forms the backbone of many other flavonoids, may have positive effects in combating or helping to prevent many different types of cancer, including prostate. It also acts as an antihistamine and has anti-inflammatory properties, which may be helpful in relieving the pain of an inflamed prostate.

Foods rich in quercetin include apples, black & green tea, onions, raspberries, red wine, red grapes, citrus fruits, broccoli & other leafy green vegetables, and cherries. Quercetin can also be found in honey and sap, including the type from eucalyptus and tea tree flowers.

It's important to remember to get a healthy balance of foods to keep your prostate healthy, including antioxidants, vitamin E from nuts and seeds, and drink plenty of clear fluids to help flush the bladder. Try to avoid caffeine, alcohol, and spicy foods. Keeping your weight in check will also help maintain a healthy prostate.

Superfoods for a Super Pregnancy

Pregnancy is a wonderful time in your life. It can also be very taxing and exhausting for your body, mind and spirit at times. But by nourishing your body with these great superfoods, you'll be energized, strong, and sharp, and ready to welcome your pending bundle of joy healthy and happy.

Beans and legumes are good sources of protein, fiber, calcium, iron, thiamine, and niacin. Make a big batch of beans when you have time and freeze them in small containers. Be careful with canned varieties, as they're usually higher in sodium and their nutritional value is a bit lower since they're processed using high temperatures. Soybeans provide more protein than any other bean or legume, making them a staple either the vegan or non-vegan. Soybeans are rich in many nutrients, including calcium and iron. ##Include plenty of whole grains like brown rice, quinoa, millet, and oats as they're a great source of fiber, minerals, protein and B complex vitamins. Buy the least processed grain types you can find, since many of the commercially prepared grains have had the nutritional and beneficial germ and bran removed.

Dark green leafy vegetables like kale, collard greens, watercress, and spinach are especially important while pregnant or lactating because they supply so many vitamins and minerals, including vitamins A and C, calcium, and iron. Dark leafy green vegetables also are rich in phytochemicals like beta carotene and lutein which protect against many forms of cancer. Vegetables from the cabbage family such as broccoli, Brussels sprouts, and cabbage are wonderful sources of vitamin A, vitamin C, and calcium. They are also rich in phytochemicals that have anticancer properties. Dark green leafy vegetables and cabbage family vegetables provide important nutrients that help to promote a plentiful milk supply for your baby. ##Nuts and seeds are good sources of fiber, protein, minerals, and essential fatty acids. Be sure to eat flaxseeds, pumpkin seeds, almonds and walnuts to get omega-3 fatty acids, which are important for baby's brain and nervous system development as well as your own health. Nuts and seeds can be eaten raw or toasted, and work great in a salad made of dark leafy green vegetables.

Lastly, it's important to drink plenty of water, and make sure you're getting plenty of rest during this time. A well-hydrated, well-rested body recovers more quickly, and ready to take on the challenges that life with a newborn baby brings with it.

Superfoods for Sinusitis Relief

Sinusitis simply means inflammation of the sinuses, but this gives little indication of the misery and pain this condition can cause. Chronic sinusitis, sinusitis that persists for at least 3 weeks, affects an estimated 32 million people in the United States and Americans spend millions of dollars each year for medications that promise relief from their sinus symptoms.

Symptoms of sinusitis can include fever, weakness and tiredness, a cough that may be more severe at night, and runny nose or nasal congestion. In addition, drainage of mucus from the sinuses down the back of the throat (postnasal drip) can cause a sore throat.

However, by introducing a few of the superfoods from certain vitamin groups, we can lessen our chances of becoming afflicted with this painful and bothersome malady.

Citrus fruits, red berries, tomatoes, potatoes, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, red and green bell peppers, cabbage, and spinach are all excellent dietary sources of vitamin C, which helps promote a healthy immune system.

The B-complex vitamins are actually a group of eight vitamins, which include thiamine (B1), riboflavin (B2), niacin (B3) and folic acid (B9), and are essential for a healthy nervous system, processing carbohydrates for energy, and the creation of red blood cells. Organ meats, beans, whole grain cereals, oatmeal, potatoes, salmon, bananas, and spinach are only a few of the many food members of the vitamin B group with high levels of this group of nutrients.

Vegetable oils, nuts, green leafy vegetables, and fortified cereals are common food sources of vitamin E, an antioxidant that acts to protect your cells against the effects of free radicals, which are potentially damaging by-products of energy metabolism. Free radicals can damage cells and may contribute to the development of cardiovascular disease and cancer. Vitamin E has also been shown to play a positive role in immune function.

Inhaling steam from a vaporizer or a hot cup of water can soothe inflamed sinus cavities. Another treatment is saline nasal spray, which can be purchased in a pharmacy. A hot water bottle; hot, wet compresses; or an electric heating pad applied over the inflamed area also can be comforting.

A person susceptible to sinus disorders, particularly one who also is allergic, should avoid cigarette smoke and other air pollutants. Inflammation in the nose caused by allergies predisposes a patient to a strong reaction to all irritants. Drinking alcohol also causes the nasal-sinus membranes to swell. Try to avoid dairy products, as they stimulate your body to produce more mucous.

Superfoods for Super Skin

It's been said we are what we eat, and that sentiment definitely holds true when it comes to our skin. It's our body's biggest organ, and it deserves all the nutritional TLC we can give it. So take a look at what you've been feeding yourself, and therefore feeding your skin.

One of the most important components of skin health is vitamin A, and probably one of the best sources of it is low-fat dairy products. It could be said the health of our skin depends on vitamin A. Low-fat yogurt is not only high in vitamin A, but also acidophilus, the "live" bacteria that is good for intestinal health. Turns out, it may also have an impact on the skin, since it aids in digestion. Other good sources of vitamin A include cod liver oil, sweet potatoes, carrots, leafy vegetables, and fortified breakfast cereals.

It's important to also make sure you're eating foods rich in antioxidants, such as blackberries, blueberries, strawberries, and plums. The benefits of these foods for healthy skin are plentiful. The antioxidants and other phytochemicals in these fruits can protect the skin cells, so there is less chance for damage. This in turn guards against premature aging, and keeps skin looking younger longer. Other fruits and vegetables that are high in antioxidants include artichokes, black, red, and pinto beans, prunes, and pecans.

Essential fatty acids (EFAs) are essential to your skin. Include salmon, walnuts, canola oil, and flax seed. EFAs keep cell membranes healthy, and allow nutrients to pass through.

We also need healthy oils, which contain more than essential fatty acids. Eating good-quality oils helps keep skin lubricated and keeps it looking and feeling healthier overall. Look for oils that are cold pressed, such as olive or extra virgin oil. We only need about two tablespoons a day of healthy oils, so use wisely.

Selenium plays an important role in the health of skin cells. Turn to foods like Whole-wheat bread, muffins, and cereals; turkey, tuna and brazil nuts for this important nutrient. Recent studies show that if selenium levels are high, even skin damaged by the sun may only suffer minimal, if any, damage. Choosing the whole grain versions of complex carbohydrates can have a significant effect on insulin levels. Processed and refined sugars can cause inflammation that may ultimately be linked to skin break outs.

Green tea has anti-inflammatory properties, and it protects the membrane of the cell. It may even help prevent or reduce skin cancer risks.

Water plays such an important role in your overall health, and it has a profound effect on your skin's health as well. Well-hydrated skin is healthy and young-looking. It also helps move the toxins out of your system so they have less chance to do damage.

Superfoods for a Superior Thyroid

An estimated 27 million Americans have thyroid disease, and more than half are undiagnosed. Frequently misunderstood, and too often overlooked and misdiagnosed, thyroid disease affects almost every aspect of health. Taking care of it with good nutrition is a smart step in the right direction. Here are some superfoods that research has shown can nurture a healthy thyroid, as well as some ones to avoid.

Coconut and coconut butter, or more commonly known as coconut oil, has been used as a food and medicine since the dawn of history. Unlike saturated animal fats found in meats and dairy products, coconut butter is a raw saturated fat containing fatty acids which the body can metabolize efficiently and convert to energy quickly. Research also shows it helps to regulate thyroid function.

Kelp is a stellar, nutrient-dense sea vegetable. It is also known as Laminaria and contains a natural substance that enhances flavor and tenderizes. Kelp works as a blood purifier, and promotes adrenal, pituitary and thyroid health. Its natural iodine may help normalize thyroid-related disorders, like overweight, and lymph system congestion.

Turkey is one of the leanest protein foods and is low in calories, making it an excellent healthy food choice. Turkey also contains selenium which has been shown to inhibit cancer development, improve the immune system, and aid in the metabolism of our thyroid hormone.

Thyroid patients should avoid the consumption of goitrogens, substances that suppress the function of the [# HYPERLINK "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thyroid" \o "Thyroid"](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thyroid) #thyroid# gland, and which can also cause an enlargement of the thyroid. Goitrogens are in foods such as broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, mustard, kale, turnips, and canola oil. Soy and peanuts also include goitrogens and should be avoided.

Both copper and iron are so important for thyroid function, so thyroid patients should take time to make sure they're getting enough in their diets. Foods such as organ meats, oysters, clams, crabs, cashews, sunflower seeds, wheat bran cereals, whole-grain products, and cocoa products are all rich in copper.

Foods like leafy green vegetables, beans, shellfish, red meat, and poultry are high in iron. Complement your iron intake with adequate amounts of vitamin C from foods such as citrus fruits, red berries, tomatoes, potatoes, and bell peppers to help maximize your body's iron absorption efficiency.

Jump for Joy and Juice!

Juice can actually be considered a natural water source and provides the body with protein, carbohydrates, essential fatty acids, vitamins, and minerals that can be absorbed quickly and efficiently. Fresh juice also contains necessary enzymes, and pigments such as carotenes, chlorophyll, and flavonoids.

Juicing fresh fruits and vegetables provides numerous nutritional advantages that are extremely important to weight loss. In addition, diets containing a high percentage of uncooked foods are significantly associated with weight loss, improved blood sugar control, and lower blood pressure.

Your appetite finds a raw foods diet more filling. Cooking can cause the loss of up to 97% of water-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K. Since uncooked foods such as juices contain more vitamins and other nutrients, they are more satisfying to the body, so it does not feel starved for nutrients. This means the metabolism will keep running efficiently and keep your weight loss efforts headed in the right direction.

Juicing kick-starts your body's digestive process and enables quick absorption of high-quality nutrition, which can result in increased energy. This is one of the great advantages of achieving weight loss through improved nutrition. Fresh juices, combined with a well-balanced diet will provide you with the energy needed to burn more calories, fat, and provide you with the fuel you need for physical activity.

However, juicing does remove the fiber from these nutrient-dense foods. So be sure to include an appropriate amount of fiber-rich foods in your daily diet. Juicing should be a complement to a well-balanced healthy diet, not a substitute.

So with a little planning and creativity, juicing could enhance your well-balanced diet and add some zest. The internet is a great resource for juicing recipes and information, and with the realization that raw foods and juicing is a great health boost, books and magazine articles are touting the benefits and offering recipe ideas.

Water is our Body's Lifeblood

The human body can last weeks without food, but only days without water. The body is made up of approximately 55 to 75 per cent water. Water forms the basis of blood, digestive juices, urine and perspiration and is contained in lean muscle, fat and bones.

As the body can't store water, we need fresh supplies every day to make up for losses from lungs, skin, urine and feces. Water is needed to maintain the health and integrity of every cell in the body, keep the bloodstream liquid enough to flow through blood vessels, help eliminate the by products of the body's metabolism, helps to flush out toxins, regulate body temperature through sweating, lubricate and cushion joints and carry nutrients and oxygen to the body's cells, just to name a few. Drinking refreshing, clean water plays a major role in reducing the risk of certain diseases.

The loss of body water through urination is greatly increased by the ingestion of decaffeinated and alcoholic beverages. These drinks have a diuretic effect, meaning they stimulate the kidneys to excrete more urine. Not only do we lose water, we also lose water-soluble vitamins, such as vitamin C, vitamin B (thiamine) and other B complex vitamins. For every caffeinated or alcoholic beverage you drink, you need to add an additional glass of pure water.

A diet containing lots of fruits and vegetables will supply about 4 cups of water per day. Even with a diet high in fruits and vegetables, it is still necessary to drink an additional 6 to 8 cups of water per day to supply enough water to meet the body's daily needs. For every caffeinated or alcoholic beverage you drink, you need to add an additional glass of pure water.

Dehydration occurs when the water content of the body is too low. This is easily fixed by increasing fluid intake. Symptoms of dehydration include headaches, lethargy, mood changes and slow responses, dry nasal passages, dry or cracked lips, dark-colored urine, weakness, tiredness, confusion and hallucinations. Eventually urination stops, the kidneys fail and the body can't remove toxic waste products. In extreme cases, this may result in death. Approximately six to eight glasses of a variety of fluids can be consumed each day. More than eight glasses may be needed for physically active people, children, people in hot or humid environments, and breastfeeding women. Less water may be needed for sedentary people, older people, people in a cold environment or people who eat a lot of high water content foods.

Healthy Diet Essentials

According to the United States Department of Agriculture, a healthy diet is one that emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products; includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts; and is low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars. But just what minerals and nutrients are vital to our health and well-being? Consider these nutrient-dense foods when you're looking to improve your vitamin and mineral intake.

Vitamin A is needed for good eyesight and optimal functioning of the immune system. Cod liver oil, dairy products, sweet potatoes and dark green leafy vegetables are all great natural food sources of vitamin A.

Vitamin B1, also known as thiamin, is imperative to the body's ability to process carbohydrates. Whole grain breads, cereals and pastas have high amounts of thiamin.

Riboflavin, or B2, can be found in fortified cereals, almonds, asparagus, eggs, and meat. It's used in many body processes, including converting food into energy and the production of red blood cells.

Niacin, also known as B3, can be found in lean chicken, tuna, salmon, turkey, enriched flour, peanuts, and fortified cereals. It aids in digestion and also plays a key role in converting food into energy.

Vitamin B6 can be found in fortified cereals, fortified soy-based meat substitutes, baked potatoes with skin, bananas, light-meat chicken and turkey, eggs, and spinach. It's vital for a healthy nervous system, and helps break down proteins and stored sugars.

Vitamin B12 is needed for creating red blood cells, and can be found in beef, clams, mussels, crabs, salmon, poultry, and soybeans.

Citrus fruits, red berries, tomatoes, potatoes, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, red and green bell peppers, cabbage, and spinach are all loaded with vitamin C, which is vital to promoting a healthy immune system, and making chemical messengers in the brain.

Vitamin D can be found in fortified milk, cheese, and cereals; egg yolks; salmon; but can also be made by the body from sunlight exposure. It's needed to process calcium and maintain the health of bones and teeth.

Vitamin E functions as an antioxidant and is essential to your skin's good health. Eat plenty of leafy green vegetables, almonds, hazelnuts, and vegetable oils like sunflower, canola, and soybean to get this vital nutrient.

Folic acid can be found in fortified cereals and grain products; lima, lentil, and garbanzo beans; and dark leafy vegetables. It's vital for cell development, prevents birth defects, promotes heart health, and helps red blood cells form. Pregnant women need to take special care to ensure they are getting enough of this for themselves and their developing baby.

Dairy products, broccoli, dark leafy greens like spinach and rhubarb, and fortified products, such as orange juice, soy milk, and tofu are all loaded with calcium. Like vitamin D, it's very important in helping to build and maintain strong bones and teeth.

Organ meats, oysters, clams, crabs, cashews, sunflower seeds, wheat bran cereals, whole-grain products, and cocoa products are all high in copper, which aids in metabolism of iron and red cell formation. It also assists in the production of energy for cells.

Iron can be found in leafy green vegetables, beans, shellfish, red meat, poultry, soy foods, and some fortified foods. It's needed to transport oxygen to all parts of the body via the red blood cells.

Potassium can be found in foods like Broccoli, potatoes (with the skins on), prune juice, orange juice, leafy green vegetables, bananas, raisins, and tomatoes. It aids in nervous system and muscle function and also helps maintain a healthy balance of water in the blood and body tissues.

Red meat, fortified cereals, oysters, almonds, peanuts, chickpeas, soy foods, and dairy products are great dietary sources of zinc. Zinc supports the body's immune function, reproduction capabilities, and the nervous systems.

Protein is the main component of muscles, organs, and glands. Every living cell and all body fluids, except bile and urine, contain protein. The cells of muscles, tendons, and ligaments are maintained with protein. Children and adolescents require protein for growth and development, and adults need it to maintain cell integrity. It can be found in foods like beans, milk and meat.

The primary function of carbohydrates is to provide energy for the body, especially the brain and the nervous system. Complex carbohydrates are the best choice for a stable blood sugar level. Whole grain breads and cereals, legumes, and starchy vegetables are all good complex carbohydrate sources. Essential fatty acids play a part in many metabolic processes, and there is evidence to suggest that low levels of essential fatty acids, or the wrong balance of types among the essential fatty acids, may be a factor in a number of illnesses. Good sources are Fish, shellfish, flaxseed, canola oil, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, leafy vegetables, and walnuts.

Though this list is far from complete, it gives a good base of knowledge on which to build a healthy, well-balanced diet.

Conclusion

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