

TWELVE SUPERFOODS

BERRIES: Blueberries in particular, but any of the berries will provide phytonutrients, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and fiber. Best eaten fresh or frozen; not cooked. Blueberries provide the most health-protecting antioxidants (ounce for ounce) of any fruit or vegetable. Recommended servings are ½ cup at least 3 times per week. Eating blueberries just one time per week could help cut your risk of high blood pressure. Less pesticide spray (folates, antioxidants and fiber).

LEGUMES: Especially Black Beans which are more easily digested than other beans and packed with antioxidants and fiber. Black beans help to lower cholesterol and LDL levels, scavenge free radicals, moderate insulin resistance and reduce cancer risk. Try to eat this powerhouse of nutrients at least 1 time per day. They can be added to salads, soups and stews, burritos, eaten as a side dish, or served as a main course. They are an extremely versatile bean. Other great legumes are kidney, pinto, great Northern and navy beans, chickpeas and lentils.

CRUCIFEROUS VEGETABLES: Broccoli is the very best because it contains the most antioxidants, vitamin C and folate. Eating broccoli may help prevent cataracts and protect older people from macular degeneration. Broccoli provides some vitamins when fresh and others are available when cooked. Other cruciferous vegetables include cauliflower, cabbage and Brussels sprouts. Try to eat ½ cup of these vegetables per day.

DARK CHOCOLATE: Yeah!! Dark chocolate has the highest antioxidant content of any food. The darker the chocolate, the higher its antioxidant content (processing may affect this). Dark chocolate has demonstrated heart protecting benefits such as increasing HDL (good cholesterol) and reducing LDL. 70% and higher dark chocolate can provide 3 grams of fiber per one-ounce serving. Eat one-ounce of dark chocolate per day as a snack.

GRAINS: Oatmeal in particular is an excellent grain (especially oat bran) because it provides the high fiber that helps to lower blood cholesterol and reduces the risk of heart disease. Eating oats regularly may also reduce insulin resistance. Other excellent grains include brown rice, wild rice, quinoa, barley, etc. All of these grains provide an excellent source of fiber and some, like quinoa contain all of the 8 amino acids that our body requires, but cannot produce.

ALLIUMS: Raw onions, especially red, provide the most nutrients of all alliums. Garlic would be excellent, but it is difficult to eat enough raw to be very beneficial and cooking destroys some of the health-promoting nutrients. Raw onions and minced garlic are great in salsas, salads and on sandwiches. Cooked onions and garlic can be used in almost everything so use lots. The sulfur compounds thin blood and raise HDL levels. Anti-in-

flammatory flavonoids can help protect the lungs against cancer and asthma and are not destroyed by cooking. Eat onions and other alliums such as garlic, shallots, green onions and chives every day.

COLD WATER FISH: Salmon is the best known and healthiest choice because it contains an abundance of omega-3 essential fatty acids. We can only get these critical nutrients from food. Wild salmon (mostly Pacific) which is dark pink or red in color has the most omega-3 fatty acids. The EFA's lower triglycerides, LDL and blood pressure which help reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke. They also reduce inflammation which can benefit people with arthritis and other autoimmune diseases. The ideal amount of fish for optimal health would be at least two servings per week. Canned or pouched salmon or tuna can be used in place of frozen. Other foods that provide Omega-3 Fatty Acids include: tuna, sardines, mackerel, walnuts and flax.

SOY FOODS: Soy comes in so many forms that it can be eaten every day in some form. There are soymilk, soy yogurt, smoothies, cereals, snack bars, soy flour, soy butter, miso, tempeh, tofu and edamame. Roasted soy nuts make a tasty snack and canned soybeans can be added to soups and salads. One serving of soy per day can help to reduce blood pressure, protect and maintain bone strength and may help to stabilize blood sugar and reduce insulin resistance.

DARK GREEN LEAFY VEGETABLES: Spinach and kale top the list for health with their abundance of antioxidants and folate. Eat green with lemon juice or other citrus to help make the iron in these vegetables available to your body. The folate in spinach and kale may help protect against colon, breast and other cancers as well as deep vein thrombosis. Other greens that contain antioxidants and folate include: deep green lettuces, Swiss chard, bok choy and mustard and turnip greens.

SWEET POTATOES AND YAMS: These tasty potatoes seem very sweet, but have a lower glycemic index than regular potatoes and rice. They are high in fiber and contain more beta-carotene than carrots or other orange and yellow vegetables. Beta-carotene is associated with boosting the immune system and may play a role in protecting against certain cancers. Substitute these powerhouse foods including carrots, squash, pumpkin and orange bell peppers for potatoes or rice several times a week. A serving a day is best.

TOMATOES: these delicious fruit/vegetables contain an abundance of lycopene in addition to a number of other phytochemicals which help to protect the body against cancers and heart attack and help us age in a healthy manner. Eat a serving of cooked tomatoes every day with a polyunsaturated or monosaturated fat to help the body absorb the lycopene. One serving equals 1 medium raw, 1 cup cherry tomatoes, ½ cup chopped or sauce, ¼ cup puree or 2 tablespoons paste.

NUTS AND SEEDS: Walnuts, almonds, pine nuts, sunflower seeds, pecans, pumpkin seeds and hazelnuts provide polyunsaturated fats which help to reduce LDL cholesterol and increase HDL cholesterol. Walnuts also are one of the few plant sources of omega-3 fatty acids and a small portion 12 to 14 walnut halves seems to help satiety (feeling full). They are high in calories, but clinical studies have found that when they replace other foods they helped increase and sustain weight loss. They are best eaten raw to retain the EFA. Eat one to one and one-half ounces daily.