



Eat your way to better health

By Wyatt Myers

Looking for a cutting-edge cure from nutrition? The most recent research suggests that whole foods rather than supplements are the answer. Here are 10 great foods that can help.

If you've paid any attention to nutrition news of late, you've probably noticed that the story on supplements is far from good. Several vitamin and herbal remedies that were once thought to have healing properties have been shown in recent clinical studies to be ineffective and even dangerous.

Vitamin E is perhaps the most famous of the bunch. This nutrient was once hailed as a heart-health superstar, but recently it's been shown that taking more than 400 IU (International Units) of vitamin E a day leads to an increased risk of death. Garlic supplements have faced similar criticism. Once viewed as a proven cholesterol-buster, this bulb is now just busted. Vitamin C and beta-carotene are just two more whose reputations have taken a similar hit.

Despite the bad news about supplements, many medical experts actually see this as a positive trend. "It just reaffirms what we've known all along," says Christopher Gardner, Ph.D., of the Stanford Prevention Research Center at Stanford University Medical Center. "That it's better to get your nutrition from foods than from supplements."

Along those lines, a growing amount of research has been devoted to the healthy potential of whole foods. To find out which healing foods should be gracing your dinner plate, we spoke to a number of today's top nutritionists. Here's what they had to say.

Get the right grains

Most people now know that they should be eating less refined carbohydrates and more whole grains. But did you know that some grains are greater than others?

That's why Jackie Keller, founding director of NutriFit, Los Angeles' premier health food company, and author of *Body After Baby: A Simple, Healthy Plan to Lose Your Baby Weight*, recommends buckwheat as her top healing food. "Buckwheat contains a variety of flavonoids that have been shown to help block the spread of cancer, particularly quercetin and rutin," she says. "It also contains vitamin E that, when combined with the flavonoids, enhances the protective properties of buckwheat."

According to Janet Bond Brill, Ph.D., RD, a nutritionist and author of *Cholesterol Down: 10 Simple Steps to Lower Your Cholesterol in 4 Weeks—Without Prescription Drugs*, another great grain is flaxseed. Dr. Brill says that flaxseeds fight cancer and heart disease

with three key ingredients: soluble fiber, lignans (plant hormones) and omega-3 fatty acids. She recommends one to two tablespoons a day of ground flaxseeds mixed in shakes, yogurt or oatmeal.

Stay merry with cherries and berries

If a food ends in "erry," chances are it's pretty good for you. Cherries and a number of berries topped our experts' list of healing foods because of their high antioxidant potential. Cathy Wong, ND, [About.com](#)'s "Alternative Medicine" expert and the author of *The Inside Out Diet*, says that tart cherries are a natural anti-inflammatory, which makes them great for treating arthritis, gout, muscle pain, back pain and diabetes, among others. There's even a tart cherry juice called CherryPharm that provides the daily dose of 45 cherries in an 8-ounce bottle.

The healing power of berries is no less impressive. Ann G. Kulze, MD, founder and CEO of Just Wellness, LLC, and author of *Dr. Ann's 10-Step Diet*, says that blueberries have more antioxidants per serving than any other fruit or vegetable. She recommends at least half a cup of any type of berries daily.

Yet another berry is just emerging on the nutrition scene: the Tibetan Goji berry. "These berries are powerful antioxidants, with 18 of the 20 necessary amino acids, more beta-carotene than carrots, more iron than spinach, 21 trace minerals and vitamin C," says Melody Hart, ND, Ph.D., a naturopathic physician with [ChicagoHealers.com](#). "The protein in Goji berries has an insulin-like reaction that is effective in fat decomposition. And with all this going on, it also helps to detoxify the liver and kidneys."

A better bean

Brimming with fiber, beans are a healthy food choice for anyone. But Keller says that lentils are one legume that's a cut above the rest. "Lentils are higher in folate than other types of legumes. Plus, they cook quickly and need no presoaking," she says. "Dried lentils also tend to cause less intestinal gas and flatulence than other types of beans."

Go with guava

When you think vitamin C, the first fruit that springs to mind is almost always an orange. But Dr. Wong says it's time to find a new fruit. "One guava has approximately 165 milligrams of vitamin C and only 46 calories, compared to an orange, which has 75 milligrams of vitamin C and 60 calories," she says. "Also, one cup has 688 milligrams of potassium, more than a banana, as well as nearly 9 grams of fiber."

Dr. Wong recommends avoiding guava juice, which is high in sugar, but instead sticking to the whole fruit.

Tantalizing tea

Green tea has received a lot of good press for its healing properties. The most recent research seems to indicate that the polyphenols in green tea keep cholesterol from oxidizing, which prevents clogged arteries. They also may play a role in fighting cancer.

Keller says that green tea is preferable to black tea because the leaves are fresher and less processed, which means they have a higher content of polyphenols. She recommends striving for three to four cups a day, but steering clear of supplements, which may deliver an unsafe dose of polyphenols.

Fix it with fish

By now, the health benefits of omega-3 fatty acids are well known—they are good for your heart, reduce inflammation and promote brain health, among other things. But despite all this, most people still don't get enough of them. "I consider the lack of omega-3 fats in the standard American diet one of the most serious but unrecognized nutritional problems this country faces," says Dr. Kulze.

Luckily, she says there's an easier way to get enough of these fatty acids in your diet: eat more wild Alaskan salmon. "This superstar protein is one of the best dietary sources of omega-3 fats," she says. "I recommend that people have two to three servings a week for best results." And even if you can't get it fresh, frozen and canned Alaskan salmon provides the same benefits.

A cure from coffee?

Like eggs, coffee is one of those foods that is either healthy or unhealthy, depending on which way the wind is blowing that day. But Marina Kushner has found a way to make sure coffee is always considered healthy: by making it from soy.

As founder of Soy Coffee, LLC, she has developed Soyfee, a soy-based coffee substitute. Soyfee has a coffee-like taste and aroma, but with no caffeine and all the great health benefits of soy foods. It's available in eight great flavors, either ground or as whole beans. For more information, visit SoyCoffee.com.

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