

Seven Anti-Aging Foods To Help You Look and Feel Younger

By Heather Hudson

It's no secret that aging imperceptibly has a lot to do with what you put on your plate. Eating a range of foods dense with healthful properties can have a big impact when it comes to preventing damage and looking great – both inside and out.

“Overall, your diet should emphasize foods that deliver high nutrition relative to energy. These are foods that support anti-inflammatory effects on the body, support regulation of blood sugar, are high in anti-oxidants to help prevent cellular damage with aging and promote good elimination and detoxification,” says nutritionist Susan Fyshe.

Here are seven power foods that will fight disease, repair damage and help you keep your healthy glow.

Acai – Anti-oxidants are arguably one of the most powerful properties for aging bodies. The acai berry – found in many fruit juices and other berry-based products – is packed with them. Nutritionist and author Rosie Schwartz says incorporating this super berry into your diet will help decrease oxidative damage in the body, including the arteries, skin and brain.

Anything in the “allium” family – Yes, they're odorous, but oh so helpful for fighting disease. Garlic, onions, leeks, scallions, chives and shallots can all help the liver eliminate toxins and carcinogens. According to Schwartz, they may also boost enzymes that destabilize cancer-causing compounds, causing potential cancer cells to effectively “commit suicide.” Raw garlic is renowned for its anti-cancer compounds, which may be destroyed when cooked. Schwartz recommends waiting 10 minutes after chopping it before throwing it into your stir fry so compounds have a chance to stabilize.

Barley – Anyone concerned about cholesterol, blood pressure or their weight should give this humble grain another look. An excellent source of soluble fibre, barley contains tocotrienols, compounds that are part of the vitamin E family and may decrease the production of cholesterol and help stabilize blood sugar. Most commonly found in hearty soups, it also makes a great salad or pilaf.

Beans and lentils – A staple in many Indian and Middle Eastern diets, North Americans are notorious for ignoring them. But there are great benefits to folding them into soups, salads or pastas. Not only are they low in fat, beans and lentils offer plenty of dietary and prebiotic fibre, which Schwartz says benefits the bacteria in our gut and may help support the immune system and increase longevity.

Buckwheat – A member of the rhubarb family, buckwheat is a great choice for people who have celiac disease or problems digesting certain grains. With fibre that lowers cholesterol and flavonoids which fight cancer and heart disease, barley is also high in magnesium, a mineral most of us don't get enough of. “Magnesium is related to

metabolic syndrome and weight around the middle. It decreases the risk of diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and some kinds of cancer,” says Schwartz.

Hot peppers – If you think you’re getting too old for spicy food, think again. Hot peppers keep your body hopping, helping you stay trim. A compound called capsaicin boosts the metabolic rate, increases caloric burning and decreases certain kinds of cancer. Longevity and a killer body – who could ask for more?

Nuts and seeds – With so many varieties to choose from you can’t go wrong with a handful of nuts and seeds for your next snack. Walnuts, hazelnuts, almonds, macademia and pistachio nuts all contain Omega 3 fats, great for your skin, heart and brain, and are a powerful source of protein. Pair them with pumpkin, sesame and sunflower seeds to help you manage your weight – half an ounce twice a day will leave you feeling more satisfied than the same size serving of complex carbohydrates.

SOURCES

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Schwartz, Rosie, Nutrition Consultant, RD, Author *The Enlightened Eater's Whole Foods Guide* (Viking), Nutrition Guidance Services Inc. 416-964-2053