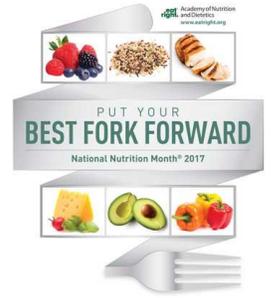


PUT YOUR BEST FORK FORWARD WITH WHOLE FOODS NUTRITION!



March is National Nutrition Month, and this year we're encouraging you to put your best fork forward with whole foods nutrition! That means choosing whole foods whenever possible instead of foods that have been highly processed and refined to remove healthy components like fiber and phytochemicals. Eating a whole foods diet can be challenging at first, but we're here with tips and tricks to help you identify whole foods and incorporate them into tasty meals and snacks for the whole family!

WHY A WHOLE FOODS DIET?

The majority of foods in the Standard American Diet have been highly processed and refined, removing many healthy components. Eating whole foods means eating foods that have not been refined, and that still have all of their naturally-occurring nutrients.

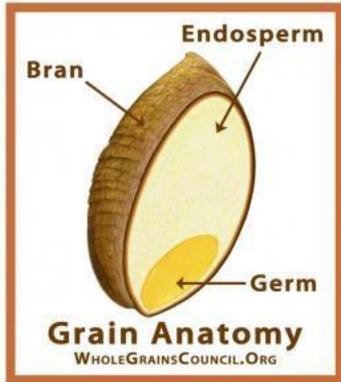


LET'S LOOK AT AN APPLE!

Apples are an excellent example. Peeling the skin off an apple removes not only nutrients, but also phytochemicals. Juicing the apple removes additional nutrients and fiber.

Many fruits and vegetables are processed in similar ways to create convenience products. Even foods like meat and dairy are often processed with fillers and additives to increase shelf life or improve appearance. While all foods can be a part of a healthful diet, eating a predominantly whole foods diet will help set you and your family on track to lead long and healthy lives.

CHOOSE WHOLE GRAIN BREAD INSTEAD



WHAT MAKES A WHOLE GRAIN?

Whole grains are those that contain all of their original layers: the bran, the germ, and the endosperm. When grains are refined through processes such as milling, cracking, or crushing, some of the bran and the germ are lost, along with fiber and many valuable nutrients.

WHAT IS FIBER?

Dietary fiber is present only in plant-based foods and can be either soluble or insoluble. Both kinds of fiber help the body by improving digestion, lowering cholesterol, and by decreasing risk of developing heart disease and diabetes. Fiber also helps to keep you feeling full for longer. Whole grains are an important source of fiber, but it is also found in legumes, like peas and beans, and in fruits and vegetables.

WHOLE GRAIN SCAVENGER HUNT

When shopping for whole grain products, look for these clues!

- * "100% whole grain" in the product name
- * A whole grain listed as the first ingredient
- * At least 3 grams of fiber per serving
- * The Whole Grain Council seal

The more of these clues you find on one label, the more likely it's a whole grain winner!



DON'T BE FOOLED!

Phrases like "made with whole grains" don't always mean the product is 100% whole grain, and neither do these terms:

- * Whole wheat
- * Enriched wheat flour
- * Multigrain
- * Seven grain

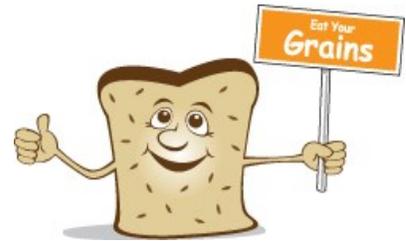
BEYOND BREADS

Once whole grain breads are a part of your routine, make the switch to whole grains with other foods too. Foods to try:

- * Whole grain pasta
- * Brown or wild rice
- * New grains like quinoa, bulgur, or millet
- * Cereals made with oats, kamut, buckwheat or spelt
- * When baking, replace half the flour with whole wheat flour

TIPS FOR PARENTS WITH PICKY EATERS

Kids don't always welcome change, but usually once the switch is made to flavorful whole grains, they never want to go back! Start with whole grain toast topped with a favorite spread or make sandwiches with one slice of white and one slice of whole grain bread for a gradual transition. It can also help to get kids involved by letting them cut their bread into fun shapes with cookie cutters!

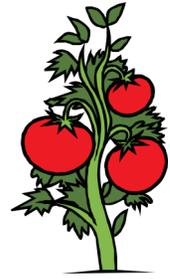


QUICK & EASY WHOLE GRAIN WRAPS

No need to fuss over specific ingredients. Simply pick up some whole grain tortillas and roll them up with ingredients you like! For extra fun and easy eating, slice the finished wrap crosswise into halves or smaller "sushi-style" bites.

1. Pick a spread (nut butter, hummus, salsa or guacamole are great choices).
2. Pick 2-3 veggies or fruits (tomato, cucumber, carrots, spinach, sliced apple, sliced banana).
3. Add "extras" (cheese, olives, pickles, peppers, mustard, etc.) to suit your taste.

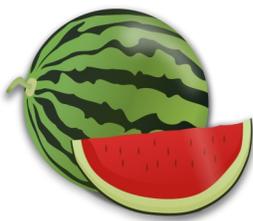
PHYTOCHEMICALS & WHY YOU SHOULD EAT THEM!



Phytochemicals are natural chemicals present in plant-based foods such as fruits, vegetables, grains and beans. These chemicals help plants protect themselves from things like predators and disease, and they also help to protect our bodies from infections and diseases like cancer. Additionally, phytochemicals provide plants with their unique colors and flavors! There are thousands of different phytochemicals and scientists are still learning about all of the benefits they provide beyond basic nutritional value.

BETA-CAROTENE

Beta-carotene is a pre-cursor to Vitamin A, which has important roles in the immune system, vision, and bone health. Beta-carotene is found in orange fruits and vegetables, such as carrots, sweet potatoes, apricots and cantaloupe. Eat something orange every day to help support optimal growth.



LYCOPENE

Lycopene is present in fruits with pink to red hues, such as tomatoes, red peppers, pink grapefruit, and watermelon. Intake of lycopene has been associated with decreased risk of cervical, prostate, and colon cancers. The heating process makes lycopene easier for the body to absorb, so try adding tomatoes and red peppers to warm meals for the most benefit!

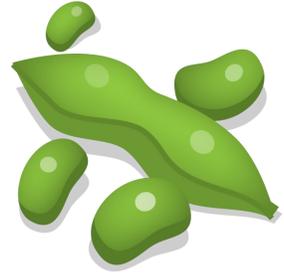
ANTHOCYANIDINS

Anthocyanidins are found present in red, blue, and purple fruits and vegetables like cherries, cranberries, blueberries, and plums. These chemicals help to maintain healthy blood vessels and reduce the risk of heart disease. Have a berry smoothie to keep your heart pumping strong!

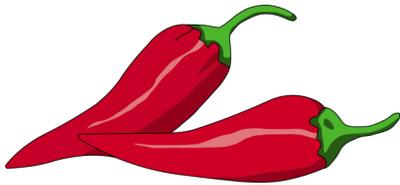


ISOFLAVONES

Isoflavones are most abundant in soybeans and other soy-based foods. Eating isoflavones can help with maintenance of healthy blood lipids and may also help decrease the risk of developing breast cancer. Try edamame for a healthy snack or add tofu to a veggie stir fry.



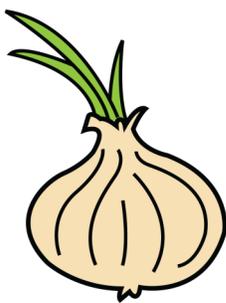
CAPSACINS



Capsaicins present in hot peppers like jalapenos are what give these plants their spicy flavor. While they may feel fiery on your tongue, these chemicals can actually help sooth pain and inflammation. The hottest peppers have the most capsaicins!

ISOTHIOCYANATES

● Isothiocyanates are found in cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, cabbage, kale and Brussels sprouts. These chemicals are widely considered to have anti-cancer properties due to their role in free radical scavenging and detoxification. Isothiocyanates have a slight bitter taste that can be neutralized with a pinch of salt or a dash of lemon. See if you can taste these cancer-fighting chemicals at work!



ALLYLIC COMPOUNDS

Allylic compounds found in garlic and onions are activated when these vegetables are cut before cooking. These chemicals have anti-bacterial properties and may help to strengthen the immune system. Add cut garlic and onions to soups during the winter months to help protect your body from infection.

It's important to remember that nutrients and phytochemicals found in whole foods often work together in the body and may not function the same way in supplement form. For that reason, it's best to obtain nutrients and phytochemicals from whole food sources whenever possible.

WHOLE FRUITS & VEGETABLES FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY



Adding fruits and vegetables to your daily routine can be a challenge. Plan for success by adding produce to your weekly shopping list. Think ahead to find ways of adding fruits and veggies to your favorite meals and snacks. Keep it simple and make it fun!

GET YOUR KIDS INVOLVED

Ask your kids to help you brainstorm new meal ideas, and get their input on foods they'd like to try. Take them shopping with you and let them choose a new fruit or vegetable each week.



TRY SMOOTHIES INSTEAD OF JUICE

Use fresh or frozen fruits, like berries, bananas, mangoes, or peaches to make a sweet treat. Whole fruits provide fiber that will help keep kids feeling full. Try adding yogurt, nut butters, or a handful of greens for added nutrients.

KEEP IT SEASONAL

Visit a local farmer's market to learn about seasonal produce. Trying new fruits and vegetables as they come into season can help increase variety in your family's diet.

COLORFUL KABOBS

Make colorful kabobs using chunks of fresh fruit or vegetables. Use fruits like melon, strawberries, oranges, and bananas. For a veggie version, try zucchini, summer squash, bell peppers, and tomatoes. Enjoy them fresh or add to the grill during summer months.



CULTURAL CUISINE

Experiment with foods from different cultures once a week. Try a vegetable stir fry or curry served over brown rice or quinoa. Build veggie pizzas on whole grain pita bread or English muffins. Create your own quesadillas on whole grain tortillas with bell peppers, tomatoes, and black beans.

DELICIOUS DIPS

Create your own dips for fruits and veggies using plain yogurt. Try adding cinnamon and vanilla to pair with fruit, or garlic and herbs for veggies like carrots, broccoli and cauliflower. Greek yogurt works great for a thicker dip and can also be used in place of sour cream on baked potatoes.

MAKE IT FUN

Let your kids play with their food! Try making “bugs on a log” with celery or carrot sticks, nut butters, and dried fruit. Create potato people on half of a baked potato, using broccoli, tomatoes, and cheese to make a silly face.



GROW YOUR OWN HERBS

Get your kids involved in tending their own herb garden. Use fresh basil to make pesto or caprese salad. Add rosemary or thyme to soups, and oregano to pasta and pizza sauces.



WHOLE FRUIT POPSICLES

Pureed melon serves as the base for these homemade fruit bars. Try adding fruits with contrasting colors for visual appeal!

INGREDIENTS

3 cups pureed watermelon or cantaloupe
 1/2 cup fresh blueberries
 1/2 cup chopped fresh strawberries
 1 kiwi, peeled and sliced
 1 peach or nectarine, diced small
 1 handful of fresh of cherries, pitted and chopped



INSTRUCTIONS

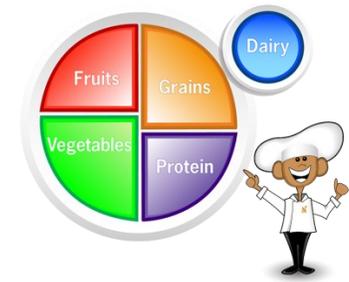
Cut melon into chunks and puree it in a blender until smooth. Set aside.

Set out about 1 dozen popsicle molds (amount needed will vary depending on size of molds). Fill each mold with chopped fresh fruit. Pour in melon puree until each mold is full to the top. Place a popsicle stick into each one. Place into your freezer and freeze for about 6 to 8 hours.

When ready to serve, run the popsicle molds under warm water for a few seconds before pulling them out. Enjoy!

For more great recipes visit: www.NourishingMeals.com

VARY YOUR PROTEINS



Protein comes from animal foods like meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs, as well as plant-based sources, such as beans, soy, nuts, and seeds. Changing your protein routine can help to make sure your diet is balanced and provides enough nutrients and fiber.

TRY SOMETHING NEW

Try a new recipe at least once a week. Include meals made with beans, seafood, nuts, and soy. Ask your friends for their best recipes and create a book of your family's favorites!



EXPERIMENT WITH PLANT-BASED FOODS

Plant-based proteins have minimal saturated fat and are high in fiber and phytochemicals. Beans, peas and lentils, are great for soups. Use chickpeas to make your own hummus. Soy foods like tofu and tempeh are great for curry and stir fry.

THINK SMALL WHEN IT COMES TO MEAT

Get the flavor you crave but in smaller portions. Make meat an optional addition to salads, soups, and sides rather than a main dish. Consider adopting "Meatless Monday" to encourage variety and help your family discover new flavors.

EAT MORE SEAFOOD

Try to include seafood one to two times per week. Aim for variety and choose fish that are high in omega-3 fatty acids and low in mercury like salmon, mackerel, herring, and shrimp.



INCLUDE DAIRY FOODS

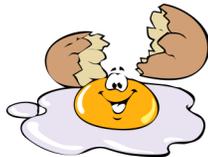
Dairy foods are not only rich in calcium, but also a great source of protein. Use cottage cheese or yogurt to make your own dips or pair with fruit for a healthy snack. Choose low-fat dairy products without added sugars to keep calories in check.

GET CREATIVE WITH LUNCH

Change up your routine! Use poultry, fish, nut butters or hummus for sandwiches and wraps. Try soft cheeses like ricotta or feta for added flavor with less saturated fat. Make a quinoa or pasta salad and add beans, nuts, chicken or tuna.

HAVE AN EGG OR TWO

Eggs are low in calories and inexpensive to add to your family's diet. The egg white is rich in protein, while the yolk contains a variety of fat-soluble nutrients. Try an omelet or eggs scrambled with veggies for a weeknight dinner.



MAKE YOUR OWN TRAIL MIX

Choose a combination of your favorite nuts, seeds, and dried fruit, such as almonds, cashews, pumpkin seeds, raisins, cherries, or apricots. Add unsweetened coconut flakes or dark chocolate chips for a special treat!



SOOTHING RED LENTIL SOUP

This colorful soup features red lentils for a healthy protein. Pair with whole grain bread or serve over wild rice for a complete meal!



INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 large onion, chopped
3 cloves garlic, crushed
2 teaspoons grated fresh ginger
2 teaspoons mild curry powder
2 cups dry red lentils
8 cups water or veggie stock
4 large carrots, peeled and sliced
4 cups thinly sliced kale
3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
2 teaspoons sea salt

INSTRUCTIONS

Heat the olive oil in a large stockpot. Add onions and sauté for ~5 minutes. Next add garlic, ginger, and curry powder and sauté a minute or so more.

Add the red lentils and veggie stock. Next add the carrots, cover the pot, and simmer for about an hour.

Turn off heat, add greens, lemon, and salt. Stir it all together and let it rest for about five minutes for the greens to soften.

Enjoy!

For more great recipes visit: www.NourishingMeals.com

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