

*Imagine a selection of foods that were delicious, nutritious and good for you, i.e. they reduce your risk of developing diseases. There are many food recommendations, with new ones added almost daily, which can become overwhelming.*

## 1. Apples

Apples are an excellent source of antioxidants, which combat free radicals, damaging substances generated in the body that cause undesirable changes and are involved in the aging process and some diseases.



Some animal studies have found that an antioxidant found in apples (polyphenols) might extend life spans. Tests on fruit flies found that polyphenols also help them to preserve their ability to walk, climb and move about.

Another study found that adult females who regularly ate apples had a 13% to 22% lower risk of developing heart disease. "An apple a day keeps the doctor away" is not just an old expression that rhymes.

## 2. Almonds

Almonds are rich in nutrients, including iron, calcium, vitamin E, fiber, riboflavin, and magnesium. Almonds are high in fat, but it is unsaturated fat. This type of fat does not increase the risk of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) or "bad" cholesterol. In moderation, the American Heart Association (AHA) notes that unsaturated fats may improve a person's blood cholesterol status. In addition, almonds contain no cholesterol. Almonds also have the highest fiber content of any tree nut.



## 3. Broccoli

Broccoli is rich in fiber, folate, potassium, calcium and phytonutrients. Phytonutrients are compounds which reduce the risk of developing heart disease, diabetes and some cancers. Broccoli also contains beta-carotene, an antioxidant, as well as vitamin C.

If the enzyme myrosinase is not destroyed during cooking, broccoli can also reduce the risk of developing cancer. The best way to cook broccoli and to preserve the myrosinase is to steam the vegetable lightly - if it is overcooked, and the vegetable's beneficial effects can be seriously undermined, researchers from the



University of Illinois wrote in the peer-reviewed journal *Nutrition and Cancer*.

The researchers said that adding broccoli to a meal can often double its anticancer properties.

Another ingredient, sulforaphane, which exists in broccoli, is also said to have anti-cancer as well as anti-inflammatory qualities. However, overcooking can destroy most of the benefits.

## 4. Blueberries

Blueberries are rich in phytonutrients, antioxidants and fiber.

According to a study carried out at Harvard Medical School, elderly people who eat plenty of blueberries (and strawberries) are less likely to suffer from cognitive decline, compared to other people of their age who do not.

Blueberries were found in another study carried out by scientists at Texas Woman's University, to help in curbing obesity. Plant polyphenols, which are abundant in blueberries, have been shown to reduce the development of fat cells (adipogenesis), while inducing the breakdown of lipids and fat (lipolysis).



Regular blueberry consumption can reduce the risk of suffering from hypertension (high blood pressure) by 10%, because of the berry's bioactive compounds, anthocyanins, scientists from East Anglia University, England, and Harvard University, USA reported in the American Journal of Nutrition.

Blueberry consumption has also been associated with a lower risk of artery hardening, and/or intestinal diseases. This fruit has also been linked to stronger bones in animal studies.

## 5. Oily fish

Examples of oily fish include salmon, trout, mackerel, herring, sardines and anchovies. These types of fish have oil in their tissues and around the gut. Their lean fillets contain up to 30% oil, specifically, omega-3 fatty acids. These oils are known to provide benefits for the heart, as well as the nervous system. Oily fish are also known to provide benefits for patients with inflammatory conditions, such as arthritis.



Oily fish also contain vitamins A and D.

Scientists at UCLA's Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center found that prostate cancer progression was significantly slowed when patients went on a low-fat diet with fish oil supplements.

## 6. Leafy green vegetables

Studies have shown that a high intake of dark-leafy vegetables, such as spinach or cabbage may significantly lower a person's risk of developing diabetes type 2. Spinach, for example, is very rich in antioxidants, especially when uncooked, steamed or very lightly boiled. Boiling spinach can significantly reduce its levels of good nutrients. It is a good source of vitamins A, B6, C, E and K, as well as selenium, niacin, zinc, phosphorus, copper, folic acid, potassium, calcium, manganese, betaine, and iron.



## 7. Sweet potatoes

Sweet potatoes are rich in dietary fiber, beta carotene, complex carbohydrates, vitamin C, vitamin B6, as well as carotene (the pink, yellow ones).



The Center for Science in the Public Interest, USA, compared the nutritional value of sweet potatoes to other vegetables. The sweet potato ranked number one, when vitamins A and C, iron, calcium, protein and complex carbohydrates were considered.

## 8. Wheat germ

Wheat germ is the part of wheat that germinates to grow into a plant - the embryo of the seed. Germ, along with bran, is commonly a by-product of the milling; when cereals are refined, the germ and bran are often milled out. Wheat germ is high in several vital nutrients, such as vitamin E, folic acid (folate), thiamin, zinc, magnesium, phosphorus, as well as fatty alcohols and essential fatty acids. Wheat germ is also a good source of fiber.



## 9. Avocados

Many people avoid avocados because of its high fat content; they believe that avoiding all fats leads to better health and easier-to-control body weight - this is a myth. Approximately 75% of the calories in an avocado come from fat (mostly monosaturated fat).



Avocados are also very rich in B vitamins, as well as vitamin K and vitamin E.

Avocados also have a very high fiber content of 25% soluble and 75% insoluble fiber.

Studies have shown that regular avocado consumption lowers blood cholesterol levels.

Researchers from Ohio State University found that nutrients taken from avocados were able to stop oral cancer cells, and even destroy some of the pre-cancerous cells.

## 10. Oatmeal

Oatmeal is meal made from rolled or ground oats, or porridge made from ground or rolled oats.

Interest in oatmeal has increased considerably over the last twenty years because of its health benefits.



Studies have shown that if you eat a bowl of oatmeal everyday your blood cholesterol levels, especially if they are too high, will drop, because of the cereal's soluble fiber content. Coarse or steel-cut oats contain more fiber than instant varieties.

Oats is rich in complex carbohydrates, as well as water-soluble fiber, which slow digestion down and stabilize levels of blood-glucose. Oatmeal is very rich in B vitamins, omega-3 fatty acids, folate, and potassium.

**If you have any questions about this topic, please reach out to CompassionLink at [info@compassionlink.org](mailto:info@compassionlink.org). We will be happy to answer your questions.**

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