

South Jersey Health & Fitness

What to Eat to Get What you Want

From the pages of South Jersey Magazine

You are what you eat. Literally.

If you are going to indulge in heavily-creamed chicken fettuccini, caramel-swirled ice-cream sundaes and over-loaded cheese pizzas, chances are you will become overweight and end up battling heart disease. Contrarily, if you eat juicy red apples, feast on vegetable medleys and dine on flaky white fish on a regular basis, you will likely escape many health ailments within your lifetime. But just what foods are better at combating which illness? We dug deep into the folders of South Jersey scientific stats to share the results. Get your pen, paper, and of course your shopping list ready. We are headed down a path to greener pastures and less frequent doctor visits.

If you want to live long and well, the rule of thumb is to fill your plate with foods loaded with antioxidants. As dieticians will attest, the agents are cancer fighters and proven weapons. Good nutrition is so much more than simply eating a plentiful amount of food. Today, much more is known about the world of vitamins, minerals and all of the microscopic ingredients that make some foods simply better for you than others. Foods that contain a powerhouse of these desired nutrients will not only satisfy your appetite, they can also ward off chronic diseases and keep you looking your absolute best.

You should be sure to eat plenty of green, leafy vegetables first and foremost, says Virtua Health Registered Dietician Stella Benne-Adkins. Foods high in fiber, such as broccoli, are incredible as they maintain cardiovascular health and deter colon cancer. Cabbage and brussel sprouts are equally as effective, says Cherry Hill wellness physician Dr. Allan [Magaziner](#). The greens contain phytochemicals, which are naturally-occurring substances that protect the body against harm (e.g., blood disorders and heart attacks, stroke).

Many fruits also have power-packing punches that can save your life. Berries high in Vitamin C also are strong fighters against many types of cancer. Whats more, the soluble fiber within the fruit works to help lower cholesterol. The best berry of the bunch is the blueberry, according to researchers at the USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging. Experts tested nearly 40 different fruits and veggies and found that the tiny bead contains the most antioxidant power. In fact, in a mere one-half cup you can get twice as many nutrients than most people consume in a day.

Any type of bean kidney, lima or Mexican for that matter can have similar effects. Edamame (the Japanese soybeans) are snacks even kids would love. The nutritious nuggets join the host of beans that can be linked to lower cholesterol. In turn, they can help save lives by staving off heart attacks and preventing strokes.

A school lunchbox staple will also knock out two of the biggest health threats faced by aging neighbors: diabetes and heart disease. The Journal of the American Medical Association reports that women who eat peanut butter or other forms of nuts at least five times a week lowered their risk of diabetes 21 percent compared to those who didn't. This is due to the hefty amounts of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats in nut products. Such good-for-you fats improve glucose and insulin stability as well as protect against heart disease.

Tomatoes take top spot for their protective properties against prostate cancer. According to **Magaziner**, they are even more beneficial on top of pizza, spaghetti and other cooked variations. Cooking tomatoes actually works to release even more lycopenes than if eaten raw he says. The fruit consists of healthful carotenoids and flavanoids also found in grapes and red wine that work to lower cholesterol and directly fight off prostate cancer.

Perhaps the biggest surprise among lycopene-filled fruits is a picnic favorite! Ounce for ounce, watermelon contains 40 percent more of the cancer-fighting compound.

In addition, many studies suggest that lycopenes may also block the plaque build-up in arteries that can lead to a heart attack. The agents can also help to offset some of the cellular damage caused by environmental pollutants, bad diet, and even aging which may lead to cancer, Alzheimers, Parkinsons and arthritis. Another strong sword against prostate and heart illness is salmon. **Magaziner** says the benefits of this coldwater fish, as well as mackerel and herring, are incredible.

A recent study by the Harvard Medical School and National Cancer Institute says that men who ate fish more than three times a week were less likely to develop prostate cancer.

Most of the health-boosting benefits of fish come from the host of omega-3 fatty acids, which also regulate depression and other mood disorders. "These acids in the fish oil help the blood flow well," explains Benne-Adkins. In addition, salmon, tuna and other fatty fish help fight inflammation so they are good weapons against aches and pains. Frequent fish consumption will also keep Alzheimers at bay.

Leeks, often found in dishes like chicken piccata and other Italian specialties, can be linked to perfect colon health. Bean sprouts, onions and garlic, too. Eating an

abundance of these vegetables may result in a reduction of your chance of getting an estrogen-related cancer.

Eggs, which maintain a bad rap for being cholesterol boosters, will likely surprise you. Eating them scrambled, easy-up or even hard boiled will help you see more clearly. The fluff stuff is actually very low in saturated fats and provides a lot of important nutrients. The yolk, which contains 213 milligrams of cholesterol two-thirds of the recommended daily allowance is one of the best sources of lutein, an antioxidant that may help prevent age-related macular degeneration. The gooey yellow liquid also contains phosphatidylcholine, which in lab animals decreased the absorption of dietary cholesterol contained in eggs into the bloodstream.

Everyone knows apples keep doctors far away, but did you know that biting into the crunchy fruit will help you breathe with ease (even more so if you smoke)? British researchers recently discovered that apples were more effective than other fruits and vegetables in reducing the risk of developing serious disease, including lung cancer. Whats more, Dutch scientists found that smokers who ate an apple a day were half as likely to develop chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD, or emphysema) and chronic bronchitis.

Carbs may not be the most popular food source to keep the waistline down, but nutritionists and experts at the American Heart Association say starches will decrease your chances of getting diabetes. When eaten in the morning, multi-grains can fill you up so that you don't snack throughout the day. They also work to stabilize blood sugar. Why? The soluble fiber in whole-grain cereals forms a gel-like material in the intestines that prevents saturated fats from entering the bloodstream and also plays a beneficial role in metabolic sugars. In addition, the fibers are fortified, therefore they also contain hefty amounts of vitamins C and B6 and iron. "Brown rice is an excellent source," says [Magaziner](#), who recommends a daily dose. To further rev up your stamina, Benne-Adkins suggests consuming a generous portion of both carbs and proteins on a regular basis. Finally, to slim down au naturale, you need look no further than the vegetable section of your grocery store. Indulging in a chili pepper or two will not only heat up your insides, it will also burn up some of your calorie intake. Capsaicin, the ingredient within the peppers that causes them to be hot, is indeed an effective weight-loss tool. Not only will eating the peppers suppress your appetite, studies show that people eat fewer calories in a meal that typically includes chili, cayenne or other types of spicy peppers. The peppers also work to rev up the metabolism so you burn many of the calories you do eat! Another great weight-loss trick load up on calcium. New research shows that dairy is directly linked to weight-loss.

But to everyones dismay, there is no magic, cure-all food. The key is to eat as much as possible from a variety of food groups, suggests Benne-Adkins. Like

exercise and even junk food, eating healthful foods in moderation will leave you looking younger, feeling vibrant, and could add years to your life.

We'll eat to that!

5 Recipes for Good Skin

1.) Mix one teaspoon of any cream-based moisturizing product and add in one egg yolk and paint it onto the face. This will act as a treatment for very dry skin. For oily skin, add the egg white.

2.) Eating an abundance of dark chocolate works as a sunscreen agent (flavanoids in cocoa can fight skin cancer)

3.) Make a paste from a little oatmeal and water. Apply to face and allow to dry. Gently wipe off with a damp wash cloth. You've concocted a great home made skin cleaner.

4.) Mash 1/2 banana and add 1 tablespoon honey and 2 tablespoons sour cream. Apply to face and let set for about 10 minutes. Gently wipe off with a damp wash cloth. Now you have a homemade acne fighter.

5.) Two tablespoons of cornmeal mixed with enough water to make a thick paste makes a great, inexpensive facial mask. Gently apply to face and wash off. A face-lift without surgery!

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