

MARCH IS NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH

KICK START YOUR HEALTH WITH FOODS THAT HELP YOU LIVE LONGER, PROTECT YOU AGAINST DISEASE, HELP YOU LOOK AND FEEL BETTER, AID IN WEIGHT LOSS, NOURISH YOUR BODY/MIND AND SUPERCHARGE YOUR ENERGY!

By Lena Mascarin RNCP, CBP



So here we are the beginning of a New Year, facing the many resolutions we've made. Maybe your goals include losing weight, joining a gym, stopping a smoking habit, improving your diet or changing your lifestyle in other ways. A solid plan – including a clear focus – is the key to success. And once you make a commitment, you are more likely to stick with it. It is never too late to make a difference! One day at a time.

This season why not decide to look and feel better, lose a few pounds, nourish your body and mind and feel more energetic! Easier said than done you say?? Anything is possible. Having a positive attitude and a willingness to step out of the box and begin a new relationship with food are steps in the right direction.

As a registered nutritionist I am a firm believer that we are what we eat! Eating the correct foods can help our bodies thrive. It's that simple! Consuming the wrong foods can be detrimental to our health.

It is of vital importance to remember that food should be:

1. Highest in quality and freshness
2. Unrefined and unprocessed
3. As natural as possible
4. High in antioxidants (antioxidants help the prevention of many diseases)

As Hippocrates once said '*let food be thy medicine; thy medicine shall be thy food.*'

So with this in mind here are my suggestions to you for twelve super foods this year to include in your diet for a healthier you...

1. Green tea – rich in antioxidants (studies have suggested that antioxidants fight off cancer, colds/flu's and have the potential to be anti-aging)

2. Broccoli - high in vitamin c and contains anti-cancerous properties

3. Yogurt – all natural! High in pro-biotics it helps re-culture the 'good' flora in the large intestine, helps maintain regular bowel movements, supports the immune system.

- 4. Berries** – wild and organic are an excellent source of fiber and high in antioxidants. Helps with inducing satiety and helps reduce food intake which is helpful for weight management.
- 5. Pomegranates** – are an antioxidant superstar! This fruit is high in vitamin C and is an anti-inflammatory.
- 6. Garlic** – a must have in everyone's diet. Garlic has some great and powerful properties. It helps lower total cholesterol and blood pressure. It is also a liver friendly food that assists in liver detoxification and destroys infection-causing viruses and bacteria.
- 7. Oats** – are a great source of soluble fibre, which helps lower bad cholesterol. Can also help lower blood glucose after a meal and are important for maintaining colon health.
- 8. Quinoa** – an excellent alternative grain that is gluten free and high in protein. Quinoa contains fiber, antioxidants and may help lower triglycerides.
- 9. Buckwheat** – this grain is a health powerhouse. High in protein and amino acids lysine and arginine, is gluten free, helps in lowering cholesterol.
- 10. Coldwater fish** - consume wild salmon. Enjoy Sardines, herring and mackerel. They are a great source of vitamin D and calcium and a great source of essential fatty acids, which are of vital importance to our health.
- 11. Cinnamon** – this warming spice can help lower blood sugar levels, aid digestion, and help reduce inflammation.

12. Nut and seeds – ‘go nuts’

Nuts and seeds are high in protein, containing healthy fats – omega 3 and 6. Nuts and seeds help reduce visible signs of aging such as wrinkles and sagging skin. They help control your weight with no hunger pangs and dramatically decreases your risk of cancer, heart disease and diabetes. Raw is always better and always consume in moderation.

Of course always remember to include more fruits and vegetables in your diet. And incorporate good fats such as olive oil, flaxseed oil, and nut oils in your diet.

To help normalize weight eat smaller portions, limit carbohydrate intake, and, yes, do PLEASE get some form of exercise at least 3 times a week – your heart and arteries will thank you.

And don't forget to drink pure, clean water every day!

So go to it! Altering your diet doesn't take a great deal of effort. Commitment – yes! And just know you are doing yourself good. So get on board this New Year and set your health and diet intentions for 2009! Make better food choices. Try making small changes. Keep a positive attitude. Exercise, get adequate rest and start feeling and looking better. Your energy will soar!

Wishing you an exciting journey to greater health and vitality this coming year!

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