

Top 10 Anti-Cancer Foods

Insure Your Long Term Good Health by Adding the Following Foods to Your Diet

Takeaways

- Flaxseed is the richest source of lignans, a potent cancer fighting compound.
- Cooked tomatoes are a great source of lycopene.
- Fibre binds carcinogens in the digestive tract and renders them harmless.
- Many common foods are known to have cancer fighting properties. Numerous medical sources list the ones they feel have the most protective benefit. The experts aren't in total agreement here, but there is a great deal of overlap amongst these lists.

Here are the ten foods most doctors believe will protect you:

Seafood: Fish, shellfish and seaweed or kelp all contain every known mineral.

Flax: Contains two cancer fighters, omega 3 fatty acids and lignans. Omega 3s support immune function while lignans are phytoestrogens, similar to but weaker than the natural hormone. They are believed to bind to a woman's estrogen receptors and block excessive estrogen activity in the cells, reducing the risk of hormone driven cancers (breast and uterine). Lots of plants contain lignans; but flaxseed is, by far, the richest source.

Green Tea: Studies have shown that the catechins in green tea suppress the growth of cancer cells. It also contains the strongest known antioxidant, EGCC.

Cruciferous Vegetables: This group is comprised of broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, collards, kale and all their kin. All are rich in anti-cancer flavonoids, but the richest source in the lot is red cabbage. All of the aforementioned are also great sources of calcium which is believed to prevent the growth of precancerous polyps that can lead to colon cancer.

Spinach: Several studies have found that folk who eat spinach twice a week or more have lower lung and breast cancer rates.

Tomatoes: One of the richest sources of lycopene, a flavonoid proven to defend against cancers of the lung, cervix, mouth and prostate. The nutrient only becomes biologically available when the fruit is cooked, so raw tomatoes (though they provide other benefits) will not work.

Organic Peppers: Better source of vitamin C than citrus fruit. Scientist have discovered that animals whose bodies produce vitamin C rarely develop cancer. As the human body does not produce this nutrient, we must ingest it. The prevailing wisdom is that 500-1,000 milligrams per day in a divided dose should produce the protective benefit. Peppers, particularly the red, orange and yellow varieties, also contain high levels of bioflavonoids. Be sure to buy organic as the others are sprayed with a pesticide which is a potent neurotoxin.

Citrus: Oranges contain more than 170 phytochemicals, many, potent cancer fighters. In addition, a bitter-tasting compound in citrus pith appears to be a highly active anti-cancer agent. Grapefruit is high in fiber at 18 grams per large fruit. This fiber binds with carcinogens in the intestine and carries them out of the body before they can cause harm.

Berries: A Harvard School of Health study found that people who eat lots of strawberries enjoy a greatly reduced incidence of cancer. Many other studies have drawn the same conclusion about cranberries, blueberries and raspberries.

Beans: Protease inhibitors are compounds that make it difficult for cancer cells to invade healthy tissue. Beans are loaded with them. They are also loaded with fiber which blocks cancer in the digestive tract.

Unfortunately, there's no way to guarantee you won't develop cancer at some point in your life, but increasing your intake of at least a few of these super-foods should greatly reduce your risk.

The Mayo Clinic's Top 10 Healthy Foods

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Top 10 Healthy Foods -- and Why They're Good for You

Apples: Apples are a good source of pectin, a fibre that can lower cholesterol and glucose levels. They're also a good source of vitamin C -- an antioxidant that protects your body's cells. Vitamin C also keeps your blood vessels healthy and aids in the absorption of iron and folate.

Almonds: These nuts are packed with nutrients -- fibre, riboflavin, magnesium, iron, calcium and vitamin E, a natural antioxidant. They're also good for your heart. Most of the fat in almonds is monounsaturated fat, which can help lower cholesterol levels when substituted for other fats. Most almonds are considered low sodium, with less than 140 milligrams of sodium an ounce.

Broccoli: Besides providing calcium, potassium, folate and fibre, broccoli contains phytonutrients -- compounds that may help prevent diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. Broccoli contains the antioxidant beta-carotene and is also an excellent source of vitamin C.

Blueberries: They are a rich, low-calorie source of fibre, antioxidants and phytonutrients. Regular intake of blueberries may improve short-term memory and reduce the cellular damage associated with aging.

Red beans: Small red, pinto and dark red kidney varieties -- are an excellent low-fat source of antioxidants, protein, dietary fibre and copper. They're also a good source of iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium and thiamine.

Salmon: This fish is an excellent source of omega-3 fatty acids, which are believed to provide heart benefits. Salmon is also low in saturated fat and cholesterol and is a good source of protein. If possible, choose wild salmon, which is less likely to contain unwanted chemicals such as mercury.

Spinach: It's high in vitamin A, and also is a good source of calcium, folate, iron, magnesium, riboflavin and vitamins B-6 and C. The plant compounds in spinach may boost your immune system and help prevent certain types of cancer.

Sweet potatoes: The deep orange-yellow color of sweet potatoes tells you that they're high in beta-carotene. Sweet potatoes are also high in vitamin C and a good source of fibre, vitamin B-6 and potassium. And, they're fat-free and relatively low in calories.

Vegetable juice: This beverage is an easy way to include vegetables in your diet since it contains most of the same vitamins, minerals and other nutrients. Tomato juice, and vegetable juices which include tomatoes, are good sources of lycopene, an antioxidant that may reduce the risk of heart attack and certain types of cancer. Be sure to select the low-sodium varieties.

Wheat germ: The germ at the center of the wheat seed is a concentrated source of nutrients. Two tablespoons provide a good source of thiamine, folate, magnesium, phosphorus, iron and zinc. Sprinkle over cereals, yogurt and salads. Or use it in muffins, cookies and pancakes.