



10 Superfoods That Should Be in Your Daily Diet **Supercharge your diet with these doctor-approved upgrades**

August 17, 2008

As Told to Max Alexander, Best Life

My interest in what is now known as integrative medicine began many years ago when I was a teenager and witnessed my grandmother battle a breast-cancer recurrence. In those days, it was typical for patients receiving chemotherapy to be confined to a hospital bed. Nothing was done to stop her decline—not nutritionally, not physically, not really medically—and she eventually wasted away and died in her bed.

A few years later, in medical school, I began suffering from ulcers and migraines. None of the physicians I visited provided any significant relief. Month after month, I tried to find a cure. Hypnotherapy, acupuncture, Rolfing massage—nothing worked. Out of desperation, I stopped eating the roast beef, burgers, and fried chicken I'd been raised on in favor of whole grains, legumes, and fruit. The idea that nutrition could help fight pain and illness was, in the medical community of the 1970s, unheard of. Yet within weeks, my ulcers and migraines disappeared.

As the medical director of the Block Center of Integrative Cancer Treatment, nutrition now plays an important role in the individualized treatment plans we develop for our patients, as well as for those patients interested in the prevention of other diseases. There is a significant amount of research that shows that eating the wrong fats and proteins, primarily from animal sources, but also including omega-6-rich vegetable oils, can actually inflame cells and create a perfect environment for cancer, like a dry forest waiting for a spark.

By contrast, diets based on plants and cold-water fish or omega-3 supplements lead to a "wet forest" that can affect the cells by reducing inflammation and work toward extinguishing the cancer spark. In patients who already have cancer, the right diet can help them tolerate chemo and radiation. At the grocery store, kale, tomatoes, and mushrooms probably won't have a single label touting their nutritional benefits, but that's only because fresh produce doesn't have much of a marketing department.

Here are 10 superfoods to integrate into your daily diet.

Garlic

This is a powerful organosulfate that's important in detoxification. It will help clean your body of leftover chemical residue from drugs or pollutants, secondhand smoke, and metabolites from alcohol.

Tofu

It's made from soybeans, which have all the benefits of other beans, including stabilizing blood-sugar levels to prevent diabetes. Try stir-frying it.

Mushrooms

Maitake and shiitake mushrooms are among the best sources of beta-glucan, which is known to stimulate the immune system. They also contain the protein lectin, which hinders cancer-cell growth.

Blueberries

These have an extraordinary amount of anti-oxidants, but many people are surprised to learn that one of their compounds, flavonoids, makes you smarter by boosting neuron signals in your brain. Look for wild varieties, which pack more antioxidants.

Kale

Possibly the healthiest food on earth, kale is rich in isothiocyanates, a phytochemical that suppresses tumor growth. Kale also contains indoles, nitrogen compounds that prevent lesions from converting into cancer cells.

Flaxseed

"In addition to omega-3 fatty acids, flaxseed contains lignans, which are antioxidants that suppress tumor growth. If you can't find flaxseed cracked, buy it whole, grind it, and then sprinkle a teaspoon over cereal.

Beans

Like other legumes, kidney and garbanzo beans are high in saponins, which are compounds that shield your DNA from invasion by so-called free radicals—unstable atoms that damage tissue and are associated with cancer.

Carrots

Besides beta-carotene—which helps prevent many types of cancer—carrots contain falcarinol, a chemical that slows the growth of cancer cells.

Tomatoes

Eat ripe tomatoes every summer. They're loaded with lycopene (an important phytochemical with antioxidant properties) and glutamic acid (an amino acid), which work together to prevent prostate cancer. Shop for organic varieties with a deep red color at your local farmers' market.

Strawberries

If you do a lot of grilling, eat strawberries. They're high in folic acids that scavenge the carcinogenic amines that are created when meat is cooked over high temperatures. They're one of the most important foods to buy organic, because they have a unique capacity for leaching pesticides.

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Best Life online: Get recipes for Dr. Block's favorite mousse, pie, and cobbler at BestLifeOnline.com/drblock.

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