



The Gold Medal Foods

Imagine a superfood -- not a drug -- powerful enough to help you lower your cholesterol, reduce your risk of heart disease and cancer, and, for an added bonus, put you in a better mood. All of these foods, beverages, and oils are all healthier options to put into your diet. These superfoods are not only delicious, but beneficial to your health. As you get thru the list, you will see a lot of fruits and vegetables at the top, while the bottom consists of healthier substitutions (i.e. A piece of dark chocolate instead of milk chocolate). Try to go for the gold when preparing a meal!

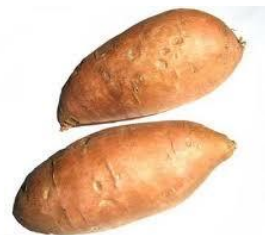


- 1. Blueberries:** They're high in flavonoids, which are antioxidant and anti-inflammatory. They're also high in Vitamin C and K. And they have a low-glycemic index, meaning they don't spike your blood sugar. They are also relatively low in calories, about 85 calories per cup.
- 2. Almonds:** Raw almonds are a great source of healthy unsaturated fat. They also have high amounts of Vitamin E and Manganese, both of which are powerful anti-oxidants. Almonds are higher in caloric intake, because of the fat content, but they make you feel more full! Scientific studies have shown that people who consumed nuts at least four times per week had lower rates of heart disease and heart attacks.
- 3. Kale:** Low in calories (about 33 per cup) and a great source of vitamins A, C, and K, as well as beta-carotene, which are all important co-factors and antioxidants. It's also a decent source of calcium and manganese.
- 4. Salmon:** Like other fatty fish, salmon is high in omega-three fats, which have been shown to be anti-arrhythmic, cholesterol-reducing, and blood-pressure lowering. (Translation: it's good for your heart.)
- 5. Tea:** Studies have shown that tea may protect against heart disease, Alzheimer's and many types of cancer. You may think that if you've tried one tea, you've tried them all, but that's not the case. There's a wide range of flavors within every type of tea and host of different preventative health benefits.



The Silver Medal Foods

1. **Apple:** High in fiber, which targets and clears away LDL, the bad cholesterol. Many of apples' beneficial compounds are contained in the skin, including high levels of phytochemicals, which have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. Remember the saying, "An apple a day keeps the doctor away"!
2. **Sweet Potatoes:** Not only are they tasty, but sweet potatoes also pack high levels of potassium that help lower your blood pressure and reduce stroke risk. If you eat the skin, you get a filling dose of fiber too.
3. **Spinach:** Spinach is chock-full of nutrients, including iron, calcium and vitamin A, which keeps the eyes and skin healthy. Spinach also packs folate, which helps the body form healthy red blood cells and prevents birth defects during pregnancy.
4. **Tuna:** High in protein, vitamin B, selenium and omega-3 fatty acids. Pregnant women and small children should limit their intake of it, however, because tuna is also high in mercury. For everyone else, tuna - including canned - is a good sandwich and salad staple
5. **Red Wine:** A compound in red wine called resveratrol has been linked to longevity and lower risk of diabetes and heart disease. Please remember to drink responsibly and moderately. Two drinks per male and one drink per female a day is the recommended amount.



The Bronze Medal Foods

1. **Dark Chocolate:** If you want to treat yourself, dark chocolate is the way to go. It's better than milk chocolate because of its high concentration of cocoa, which is packed with disease-fighting antioxidant plant chemicals called flavonol. Those antioxidants can help reduce the risk of blood clots and lower blood pressure and inflammation as well as improve insulin resistance. A little can go along way!
2. **Fat Free Milk:** Dairy products are a primary source of calcium for Americans, and they

dairy has been associated with a reduced risk of heart disease and Type 2 diabetes and with lower blood pressure in adults. And chocolate milk is a great way to replenish after a workout!

3. Oatmeal: Oatmeal is high in the fiber beta-glucan, which lowers levels of bad LDL cholesterol. Nutritionists recommend steel-cut oats because they're minimally processed, without additives. Oatmeal's an ideal postworkout food as well, since it contains energy-producing B vitamins and carbohydrates that replenish your muscles.

4. Extra Virgin Olive Oil: It's high in monounsaturated fats that can help lower cholesterol. Health experts recommend cutting the amount of saturated fats in your diet and incorporating more monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats in order to decrease your risk of heart disease. Extra-virgin olive oils are a better option than other olive oils, since they're less refined. Extra-virgin olive oil contains antioxidant compounds as well as vitamin E and oleocanthal, which can reduce inflammation.

5. Whole Wheat Bread: The government's dietary guidelines recommend that at least half the grains you eat be whole. Whole grains contain high dietary fiber and nutrients that are linked to lower risks of heart disease, some cancers, diabetes and obesity; plus, they help lower cholesterol, blood sugar and blood pressure

***Beware of breads that are marketed as "multigrain," "made with whole grains" or "enriched." While these products may contain some whole grains, they're likely to contain refined grains too. Stick to products labeled as "100% whole grain."*

