



Simple Choices: 10 Real Food, Super Foods to add to your diet in 2009 **By Desiree Nielsen RD(t), the Choices' Dietitian**

Eating well doesn't have to be expensive! Check out these 10 simple choices – foods that are good for you and easy on the wallet. Foods marked with ^L are local favourites – local food that is good for you and the planet!

1. Apples ^L
 - a. Brightly coloured apple skins show off their antioxidant appeal! Anthocyanins in apples may help to lower blood cholesterol, as does the soluble fibre they contain. Quercetin, a type of flavonoid, may ease respiratory symptoms – more reason to enjoy an (local!) apple a day.
2. Spinach ^L
 - a. Popeye was right – so eats your spinach! Spinach boasts twice the iron of other greens, plenty of folate and easy on the eyes lutein. Vitamin K is good for your bones, too! Try a strawberry and spinach salad, which will add vitamin C to help make the iron in spinach more bioavailable.
3. Prunes
 - a. According to the USDA Agricultural Research Service, prunes have more than double the antioxidants of blueberries. Prunes also contain calcium and magnesium for healthy bones and potassium for healthy blood pressure. The soluble fibre in prunes may also help to lower blood cholesterol for a healthy heart.
4. Baked Beans
 - a. Remember baked beans on toast? Did you ever think it could be good for you? Stick to the tomato sauce version for less saturated fat and a dose of lycopene, which may help prevent cancer. Beans are a wonderful source of fibre – some brands have 6 grams of fibre per half cup! Baked beans also boast folate and selenium, an important antioxidant.
5. Kefir
 - a. Kefir is not just your average probiotic - Kefir is being studied for its possible antibacterial, antifungal and antitumour properties. Rich in calcium, magnesium and folate, it also contains special carbohydrate compounds called kefirans, which may account for some of its health properties. Remember, as with all probiotic foods, you must consume them daily to have the best effects.

6. Pomegranate Juice

- a. Pomegranate juice is well known for its antioxidants. High in potassium and polyphenols, pomegranate juice has been shown to reduce the amount of plaque in arteries and promote healthy blood pressure in some studies. One particular brand, POM wonderful, has been directly studied for its effects on diabetes, heart disease and cancer. As if that weren't enough reason to get drinking, the ellagic acid in pomegranates may defend the body from environmental toxins.

7. Pumpkin Seeds ^L

- a. Seeds are the oft-neglected cousin of nuts but their powerful nutrition shouldn't be ignored! Pumpkin seeds are a heart healthy star: rich in omega 3 fatty acids; plant sterols to help lower cholesterol and magnesium. An antioxidant in seeds, phytic acid, promotes a healthy GI tract. You might never look at Jack O' Lanterns the same way!

8. Green Tea

- a. No super foods list is complete without mentioning green tea. The antioxidant EGCG in green tea may actually inhibit the growth of cancer cells. Green tea has also been studied for its potential benefits in heart disease and diabetes. Tea is a lower caffeine alternative to coffee and all teas contain an amino acid, theanine, which opposes the effects of caffeine, helping you to avoid the "jitters".

9. Cherries ^L

- a. Not that we need much convincing to eat this sweet treat – but cherries are another anti-oxidant superhero. Sour cherries are rich in vitamin C and the flavonoid, anthocyanin – which gives cherries their colour. And did you know that cherries are also a natural source of melatonin, the sleep regulating antioxidant?

10. Shiitakes ^L

- a. Mushrooms have long been revered in Asia for their role in promoting health. Shiitakes in particular appear to have a few unique compounds with promising health benefits. Eritadenine may help to lower cholesterol, while lentinan is being studied for its immune boosting properties. Shiitakes may also have potential anti-cancer properties, thanks to antioxidants such as selenium and other compounds.