

2020 QUALITY SERVICE AWARDS WINNERS

PHILIPPINES

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Reader's Digest



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HEALTH



BY *Dawn Yanek*
PHOTOGRAPHS BY
Levi Brown

18 Foods



PROVEN

to Heal

Many of us suffer from medical conditions linked to our diets. These nutritional powerhouses can make you healthier with every bite

Looking for a health superhero? Head to the supermarket. Some foods have the power to fight diabetes or heart disease – in other words, they can literally save your life. That's not an exaggeration. A large study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* found that people of any age who started including healthy foods in their diets improved their chances of living longer. Replacing one serving of red or processed meat a day with one serving of nuts or legumes, for instance, was linked to an eight to 17 per cent reduced risk of premature death.

But how do you choose the best options for you? We talked to health experts and asked them: what one nutrient-packed food would you like people to add to their diets? Here are their picks, along with some of the health issues each one may help prevent or treat.

KALE

Heals: Eye conditions

• Heart disease • Bones

**SELECTED BY DR TERRY WAHLS,
PROFESSOR OF MEDICINE**

1 "Kale is packed with carotenoids, including lutein and zeaxanthin, which are particularly beneficial for eye health. Not to mention that there's a hefty amount of glucosinolates (organic sulphur), which help the body rid itself of toxic substances. Kale also has tons of vitamin C, which improves immune-cell function; magnesium for bone health; vitamin K for blood

vessels and heart valves; and folate for brain health."

Serving size: ½ cup, cooked (59 g)

Dr Terry Wahls is a clinical professor of medicine at the University of Iowa. She is the author of The Wahls Protocol, which outlines a paleo-based diet and lifestyle programme.

GOOD TO KNOW: Aside from drinking plenty of water, people prone to kidney stones should opt for kale over spinach. Kale has a lower level of dietary oxalates than spinach, so your body won't create those painful masses of minerals and salts after you eat it.

MIXED NUTS

Heals: **Heart disease**

- High cholesterol • Low energy
- Constipation • Anaemia
- Weight gain • Diabetes

SELECTED BY MAYA FELLER, DIETITIAN
WHO SPECIALISES IN NUTRITION FOR
CHRONIC-DISEASE PREVENTION

2 “Nuts are a great source of heart-healthy fats, along with some protein. Depending on the nut, you’ll also have some fibre, calcium or magnesium. Almonds, for example, have 75 milligrams of calcium in a 28-gram serving. Walnuts are high in antioxidants. If I have a handful of mixed nuts every day, I’m getting everything.”

Serving size: About ¼ cup (28 g)

GOOD TO KNOW: Oils in nuts quickly turn rancid if exposed to too much heat. Store nuts in airtight containers in the refrigerator for up to six months.

SALMON

Heals: **Brain function**

- Stroke • Inflammation • Heart disease • Rheumatoid arthritis

SELECTED BY RIMA KLEINER,
REGISTERED DIETITIAN

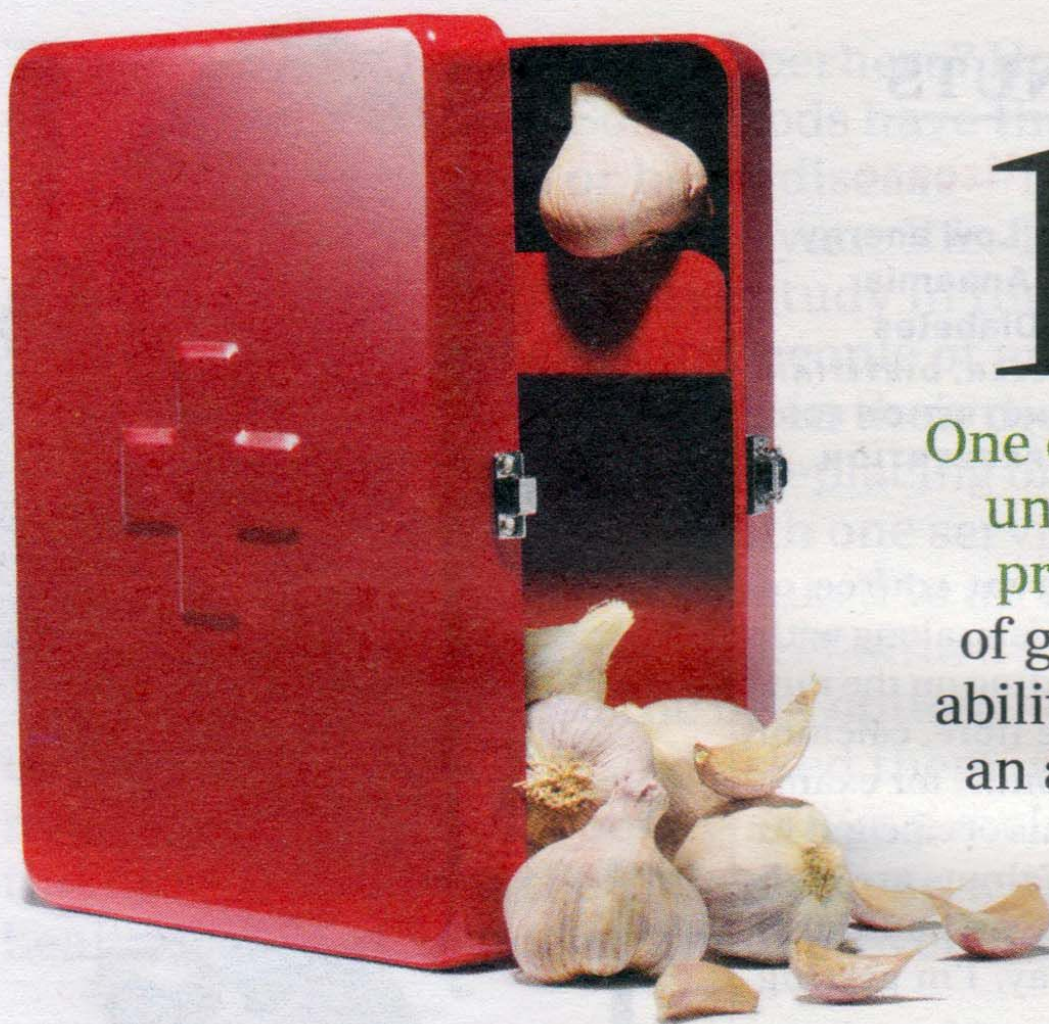
3 “Salmon – whether farmed or wild-caught, fresh, frozen or



NO.
1

Kale is packed with carotenoids, including lutein and zeaxanthin, which are beneficial for eye health

canned – is rich in protein, omega-3s, B vitamins, vitamins D and A and selenium. All of these nutrients are critical for good health, particularly omega-3s. These fatty acids help protect against age-related brain and eye diseases, reduce the risk of heart disease and depression, maintain healthy skin, calm inflammation and



NO.
12

One of the most underrated properties of garlic is its ability to act as an antifungal

boost immune function. (Other sources of omega-3s include mackerel, anchovies, walnuts and flaxseeds.) Studies show that pregnant women who eat seafood two to three times each week during their pregnancy go on to have babies with optimal brain development, including an IQ boost.”

Serving size: 85 g

PUMPKIN SEEDS

4 Pumpkin seeds are a great source of zinc, iron and magnesium as well as protein and omega-6 fatty acids. Their fibre content supports healthy digestion, heart health and blood sugar regulation.

EDAMAME

5 These green soy beans pack about nine grams of plant protein and four grams of fibre in a half cup. They are a great source of vitamin K, folate and fibre and contain no cholesterol. People who eat more whole soy may have lower rates of heart disease and certain cancers.

CAULIFLOWER

6 Cauliflower contains a compound called indole-3 carbol, which can decrease inflammation and slow cancer-cell growth. Plus it's a source of folate, fibre and vitamins.

STRAWBERRIES

7 Strawberries are loaded with vitamin C, potassium, folate and high levels of antioxidants. These fruits may help interrupt the development of type 2 diabetes, reduce inflammation in the colon and slow cognitive decline by up to 2.5 years.

FARRO

8 An 'ancient wheat' that is higher in kilojoules than most other grains, farro is also higher in fibre and protein. It provides magnesium, zinc, iron and B vitamins, including niacin and thiamine. Found at health food shops, farro is a major part of the Mediterranean diet, which studies show is great for losing weight, reducing inflammation and preventing heart disease, type 2 diabetes and dementia.

OLIVE OIL

9 Olive oil is rich in vitamin E and a great source of monounsaturated fats and omega-3 fatty acids. It helps reduce triglycerides and the density of your 'bad' cholesterol (LDL), and it may make your platelets less likely to stick together, decreasing your risk for a heart attack or stroke.

TURMERIC

10 This spice contains curcumin, which has powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory capabilities. It may reduce the risk of cancer, heart disease and Alzheimer's.

SARDINES

11 One 110 gram serving of sardines has 17 grams of protein, close to 50 per cent of your calcium requirement, and over 300 per cent of your daily vitamin B12 needs. Sardines are also full of niacin, magnesium, potassium and zinc.

GARLIC

Heals: High blood pressure

- Atherosclerosis • Heart disease
- Diabetes infections • Colon cancer

SELECTED BY KYLENE BOGDEN,
DIETITIAN NUTRITIONIST

12 "Garlic is wonderful for keeping high blood pressure at bay – something I find very useful for individuals under a ton of stress. One of the most underrated properties of garlic is its antifungal ability. Allicin is the biological compound responsible for this magical power. I often recommend fresh garlic and

EXPERT SOURCES: NICOLE BEURKENS, PSYCHOLOGIST AND NUTRITION SPECIALIST; DENA CHAMPION, AN ONCOLOGY DIETITIAN; KEITH-THOMAS AYOOB, AN ASSOCIATE CLINICAL PROFESSOR AT THE ALBERT EINSTEIN COLLEGE OF MEDICINE; KATE MARTINO, A PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT; MINDY HAAR, REGISTERED DIETITIAN NUTRITIONIST; LEE COTTON, REGISTERED DIETITIAN NUTRITIONIST; INNA LUKYANOVSKY, AUTHOR OF CROHN'S AND COLITIS FIX

NO. 14



Avocados have been shown to help improve cardiovascular health and lower cholesterol levels

sometimes a garlic supplement when someone is dealing with athlete's foot or even frequent urinary tract infections as a result of yeast over-growth. It is believed that garlic can reduce the risk of various cancers, as well as prevent cognitive decline."

Serving size: 3 cloves or 3 teaspoons, minced (9 g)

GOOD TO KNOW: Garlic is most potent when eaten raw, but it may upset your stomach. Lessen your chance of experiencing stomach irritation by eating raw garlic with a balanced meal.

OVERNIGHT OATS

Heals: **Diabetes**

- High cholesterol • High blood pressure • Heart disease
- Constipation • Weight gain

SELECTED BY DR ELENA IVANINA,
GASTROENTEROLOGIST

13 "Overnight oats - raw rolled oats soaked in milk (preferably non-dairy) and refrigerated overnight - are a terrific source of resistant starch. (Oats prepared by other means also contain resistant starch, but some is lost when oats are cooked.) Resistant starch is not digested in the small intestine and is therefore fermented in the colon. This increases good bacteria and decreases bad bacteria, which can help with constipation and lower colon cancer risk. In addition, it

reduces the amount of glucose released, therefore lowering insulin demand and reducing absorbed kilojoules. This helps with insulin resistance, diabetes and weight loss. Resistant starch is also one of the best sources of short-chain fatty acids, which helps control your hunger.”

Serving size: ½ cup (114 g)

GOOD TO KNOW: Play around with your favourite flavours – add almond butter, chia seeds, flax and fruit, such as berries and bananas. Mix together, then put in the refrigerator overnight, and you’ll have a nutrient-packed breakfast waiting for you in the morning.

AVOCADO

Heals: High cholesterol

- Heart disease • Insulin resistance
- Cancer • Blood sugar swings

SELECTED BY DR WILL COLE,
FUNCTIONAL-MEDICINE PRACTITIONER
AND DOCTOR OF CHIROPRACTIC

14 “Avocados have been shown to help improve cardiovascular health and can significantly lower total cholesterol and triglyceride levels because of their monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat content. These fatty acids have been shown to improve cognitive function, depression, anxiety and brain fog, as fats are a more efficient fuel source for your brain than glucose. Avocados also

contain essential fat-soluble vitamins A, E and K and important electrolytes such as magnesium and potassium. They are a great source of plant-based protein, with approximately four grams in one whole avocado, and boast 4.6 grams of soluble fibre per serving.”

Serving size: ½ cup, cubed (75 g)

GOOD TO KNOW: If you want your avocados to ripen faster, store them in a paper bag at room temperature, and they should be ready to eat within two to three days. Placing an apple in the bag with them speeds up the process even more. Don’t want to wait? Avocado oil is one of the healthiest oils you can cook with. Plus it has a higher smoking point than olive oil, so you can cook at higher temperatures.

POMEGRANATE JUICE

Heals: Inflammation

- Immune system • Bones
- Hypertension • Cancer
- Heart disease

SELECTED BY SAMANTHA ATTARD,
AYURVEDIC COACH

15 “Studies have shown that pomegranate juice has more anti-inflammatory compounds than blueberry juice, grape juice or black cherry juice. With my clients, I recommend pomegranate juice if they’re

having painful periods because it reduces inflammation and cramping while also providing a small (but healthy) sugar boost during a time when many women experience low blood sugar. Studies have also shown that pomegranate juice helps cholesterol and prostate-specific antigen levels in men with prostate cancer, and it has been used for hundreds of years for those with diabetes or metabolic syndrome. I choose pomegranate juice because the fruit is hard to find year-round. The juice also provides concentrated vitamins and anti-inflammatory phenols and is easier to digest than the whole fruit." *Serving size: 1 cup (250 ml)*

GOOD TO KNOW: Tossing pomegranate seeds on your salad may be good for your skin. Scientists have discovered that nutrients in pomegranates can help protect skin from sun damage and possibly even from cancer.

LENTILS

Heals: Blood sugar spikes

- High cholesterol • Weight gain
- Constipation • Anaemia
- Heart disease
- Reproductive health

SELECTED BY DR ROBERT GRAHAM,
INTERNAL AND INTEGRATIVE
MEDICINE SPECIALIST

16 "Lentils contain the highest amount of protein of any

NO.
18



Flavonoids in dark chocolate may boost mood and enhance executive functioning

plant. They are also a great source of dietary fibre, which helps control blood sugar levels and provide excellent amounts of iron, folate, magnesium and potassium. They are consumed in the Blue Zones, regions of the world identified by author Dan Buettner as having the longest-living people. Lentils, which belong to the legume family, have more fibre than beans. A quarter cup of dry lentils contains about 13 grams of fibre, and red lentils, 15 grams. A quarter cup of kidney beans has about half that." *Serving size: ½ cup, cooked (114 g)*

GOOD TO KNOW: Don't mix new lentils with older ones, because the older lentils will take longer to cook.

WATER KEFIR

Heals: Poor gut health

- Immune system dysfunction
- Infection • Inflammation • Cancer
- Low energy • Allergies and asthma

SELECTED BY ROBYN OPENSHAW,
PSYCHOTHERAPIST TURNED
NUTRITION RESEARCHER

17 “Water kefir, a fizzy, fermented drink, is one of the easiest, most cost-effective ways to get live probiotics to your gut. Making your own kefir – preferably with organic coconut water – is the superior option (see recipe). In just one day, the coconut water is bubbly and wonderfully tart. I can’t overstate the importance of eating fermented and cultured foods: the live probiotics and enzymes are essential for gut health, which ripples out into every other area of wellness. Most of our immune system lives in the gut, so when the gut is functioning well, we see benefits beyond digestion.”

Serving size: 1 cup (250 ml)

GOOD TO KNOW: It’s easy to make your own kefir. You can find water kefir ‘grains’ online and at health food stores. They are not actual grains but rather clusters of bacteria, yeast and dextran (a type of sugar). Add 3 cups organic coconut water (or a sugar-water solution) to 2 to 4 tablespoons of

grains. Cover and keep warm (20–30°C) to let it ferment. Pour the liquid out after a day (drink it or use it in smoothies or other drinks), leaving behind the crystals and the jellyfish-looking ‘mother’. Then add more liquid to make a batch for the next day. You can use the same grains numerous times.

DARK CHOCOLATE

Heals: Mood disorders

- High blood pressure
- Heart disease

SELECTED BY DR ASH NADKARNI,
PSYCHIATRIST

18 “Flavonoids, which are found in dark chocolate, may boost mood by affecting blood flow in the brain and enhancing executive functioning. Additionally, flavonoids help increase the amount of serotonin as well as other naturally occurring mood-boosting chemicals in the blood. This is separate from the experience of enjoying what you’re eating, since chocolate can also stimulate the release of endorphins. Because of its antioxidant properties, dark chocolate is increasingly being researched for its effect on boosting immunity, lowering blood pressure and protecting the heart.” *Serving size: 30 g*

GOOD TO KNOW: To obtain the most flavonoids, choose a dark chocolate with 70 per cent cacao or greater. **R**