

EATING ON THE RUN



BY CARYN HONIG, RD, LD

Foods That Run The Extra Mile – Part II of II

As reviewed in Part I of *Foods That Run The Extra Mile* (ITR, Feb. '05), studies have shown that certain foods pack a more powerful punch than others when it comes to health, wellness and fitness (*i.e.* running). Some foods are loaded with nutritional value while others have little or no nutritional value at all. Proper nutrition is a part of proper training and racing.

When researching what foods are most beneficial for the body, a few nutritional stand-outs including tomatoes, spinach, blueberries, nuts, whole grains, black beans, broccoli, salmon, garlic and green tea. In case you missed Part I, a brief summary of the benefits of tomatoes, spinach, nuts, broccoli, and whole grains are as follows:

Tomatoes: May reduce the risk of prostate cancer and other cancers of the digestive tract. Tomatoes contain lycopene, which is an antioxidant and potential heart saver. Tomatoes are also an excellent source of vitamin C.

Spinach: Spinach is loaded with iron and folate. Folate helps prevent neural-tube defects in babies and can help lower the risk of heart disease. Spinach also contains phytochemicals.

Nuts: Nuts are a rich source of protein, magnesium, B vitamins and vitamin E. Nuts contain monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats which can help lower cholesterol levels.

Broccoli: Contains phytochemicals which can reduce the risk of certain cancers. Broccoli also contains a rich source of beta-carotene, fiber, and vitamin C.

Whole grains: Contain dietary fiber and protein. Studies show that people who eat whole grains have a lower risk of stroke, colon cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

Part I explored how you can add the above five foods into your daily diet. Now it's time to improve your diet even more by adding just five more foods.

Salmon: Salmon contains Omega-3 fatty acids which have been shown to help the heart. Omega-3s prevent platelets in the blood from clumping together and sticking to arterial walls in the form of plaque. They also help lower triglycerides and LDL (bad) cholesterol. Reports also suggest that Omega-3s interact with the fatty layers that surround brain cells and, may somehow help protect brain cells from the diseases of aging.

How to add salmon to your diet:

- Have bagels, lox (smoked salmon) and light cream cheese for breakfast.
- When possible, choose grilled salmon for lunches and dinners instead of chicken or steak.

Blueberries: Pint for pint, these little blue jewels may contain more antioxidants than any other fruit or vegetable. Blueberries contain anthocyanins, phytochemicals that belong to the flavonoid family. Besides combating the free-radical damage linked to heart disease and cancer, anthocyanins may boost brainpower. Blueberries also seem to fight off urinary-tract infections by preventing *E. coli* bacteria from adhering to the bladder wall.

How to add blueberries to your diet:

- Add blueberries to cereal in the morning.
- Add blueberries to yogurt as a snack.
- Keep blueberries in the freezer to add to ice cream or frozen yogurt.
- Add blueberries to spinach salad.
- Eat a cup of blueberries for a snack.

Garlic: PEEEE-EWWWWW! What makes garlic (and your breath) smell so badly is precisely what makes it so healthy. The odor is sulfur-based compounds known as allyl

sulfides, which may protect the heart. Studies show that the sulfides can reduce cholesterol and may make the blood less sticky. Scientists are fairly confident that garlic also has antibacterial and antifungal powers. A garlic clove has four calories and zero fat. To release garlic's potent compounds, it must be mashed, smashed or minced (or chopped). Keep in mind that cooking it for a long time or at high temperatures can destroy its beneficial properties.

How to add garlic to your diet:

- Sauté garlic in oil and then add vegetables and meat.
- Chop garlic and put on meat, chicken, fish before baking or grilling.
- Add fresh, chopped garlic to salads.
- Bake a whole head for 15-20 minutes until soft and sweet and spread on bread instead of butter.

Green Tea: In Asian societies, green tea is consumed in about the same quantities as coffee is in the United States. Green tea is loaded with polyphenols, a class of phytochemicals with 100 times the antioxidant punch of vitamin C. Laboratory experiments suggest that one group of polyphenols in green tea called catechins may inhibit the growth of new blood vessels, which some scientists think may help prevent cancer by depriving early tumors of nourishment. Studies in China link drinking green tea daily with a lowered risk of stomach, esophageal and liver cancers. Studies from Japan show that consuming 10 cups a day may reduce the risk of heart disease. Reports also suggest that swishing green tea around the mouth may inhibit cavity-causing bacteria. Finally, applied to the skin of laboratory mice, it also seems to reduce the incidence of skin cancer.

How to add green tea to your diet:

- Every time you want to pour a cup of coffee, brew a cup of green tea instead.
- Put away the Mr. Coffee and bring out the tea kettle.

Black Beans: If you have trouble with beans (if you know what I mean) take Beano. When taken immediately before eating beans or other gas-forming vegetables, the product Beano helps break down those annoying fibers so that the body can absorb them. The end result of Beano is that you can eat beans without becoming bloated and gassy.

Black beans contribute carbohydrates, protein, dietary fiber, vitamins and minerals. All of that, and they are low in fat!

How to add black beans to your diet:

- Add black beans to soups and salads.
- Try vegetarian meal options such as black beans and rice.

To incorporate all 10 foods into your diet takes some effort and planning. By following the three easy-to-prepare meals and one to two snacks menu below, you can get all of the foods in one day!

Breakfast: High fiber cereal
1 cup skim milk
1 cup fresh blueberries
1 cup green tea

Lunch: Salad with 2 cups baby spinach and 1 chopped tomato
Chopped vegetables
½ cup black beans
Handful of walnuts
2 tablespoons low fat dressing
1 whole wheat roll with pressed garlic

Snack: 1 cup green tea
1 apple with 2 tablespoons peanut butter

Dinner: 6 ounces grilled salmon (marinated in garlic and soy sauce)
1 cup brown rice
1 cup steamed broccoli with fresh, chopped garlic

Snack: 1 cup yogurt with 1/2 cup of fresh blueberries and 2 tablespoons chopped almonds
There! In one day, you can successfully include the top 10 powerhouse foods. The trick is having these foods on hand so you can create your own heart healthy meals. The result will be nutritious meals to benefit your overall health and running. From now on, add these 10 foods to your grocery list and keep them in your refrigerator/freezer/pantry at all times.

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