

## Eat Well!

Food is part of our everyday life; it nourishes us, provides pleasure and comfort, and it is woven into our social lives. Our daily food choices impact our health too, in very important ways. I have found that the best strategy to improve food choices in my patients, and myself, is not to put restrictions on less healthy foods but rather to encourage the healthiest foods more often. Choosing healthy foods early and often leaves little room for less wholesome alternatives - processed foods, snacks, and sweets, etc.

Below is a list of my favorites. They are among the healthiest foods on our planet – and are both incredibly nutritious and delicious. These nutrient rich foods naturally leave us more satisfied, with fewer cravings, and less likely to overeat unhealthy alternatives. Try some of the foods below and you may discover foods you love that will love you back with better health and vitality!

### Foods to Eat Often

- Color vegetables of all kinds, organic whenever possible. (Herbicides and pesticides found on conventionally grown foods raise the risk of diabetes and obesity. See the Dirty Dozen and the Clean Fifteen below.)
- Green leafy vegetables including romaine, spinach, collards, and kale. These are high in fiber, low in calories, and full of phytonutrients, plant nutrients that keep us healthy.
- Beans and lentils are a great source of fiber, protein, and they are wonderful at lowering blood sugar and cholesterol.
- Berries, such as blueberries, strawberries, and raspberries are rich in pigmented phytonutrients that protect us from inflammation and help in the prevention of eye disease and heart disease.
- Meats and poultry are a terrific source of many nutrients, protein included. Choose naturally raised and antibiotic free if possible. You might even branch out and add some bison, venison, and lamb.
- Seafood is another great source of protein and health promoting omega three oils. The small cold-water fish, including salmon, sardines, and anchovies are lowest in mercury. Wild caught whenever possible.

- Dairy products are nutritious and lessen diabetes and improve a woman's fertility. Whole fat is now preferred; the USDA no longer prohibits saturated fats. Yogurts and kefir with live bacterial cultures are examples with the added benefit of the probiotics.
- Whole grains like quinoa, brown rice, steel-cut oats are filling, high in fiber, and lower blood sugar and cholesterol.
- Cruciferous vegetables, cabbage, broccoli, bok choy, and cauliflower, help us naturally detoxify and lower the risk of many cancers.
- Herbs and spices including garlic, rosemary, turmeric, parsley, chili, curry spices delightfully flavor our foods and lower inflammation.
- Nuts lower our risk of heart disease and stroke. Have a handful of almonds, walnuts, pecans, macadamia, or hazel nuts each day.
- Teas like green, black, and oolong boost our metabolism and reduce our risk of many cancers, especially breast cancer. Have 3 or more cups daily for the most benefit.
- Chocolate and cocoa, at least 75% dark, lowers blood pressure and occurrence of stroke. Hooray! Enjoy a small amount daily.
- Extra virgin olive oil, last but certainly not least. It lowers heart disease and stroke up to 30%. Enjoy it liberally, meaning tablespoons daily!

Avoiding Dirty Dozen and choosing the Clean 15 will reduce your exposure to pesticides and herbicides.

The Dirty Dozen are common fruits and vegetables most likely to contain high levels of pesticides and herbicides. A healthier option is to purchase these varieties organically grown. The Clean 15 contains varieties that commonly have less herbicides and pesticides and can be purchased conventionally grown to keep costs down. Find more information at [EWG.org](http://EWG.org) (Environmental Working Group)

### **Dirty Dozen**

1. Apple

2. Peach
3. Nectarine
4. Strawberries
5. Grapes
6. Celery
7. Spinach
8. Sweet Bell Peppers
9. Cucumbers
10. Cherry Tomatoes
11. Snap Peas
12. Potatoes

**Clean Fifteen**

1. Avocado
2. Sweet Corn
3. Pineapple
4. Cabbage
5. Sweet Peas
6. Onions
7. Asparagus
8. Mangos
9. Papaya
10. Kiwi

11. Eggplant
12. Grape Fruit
13. Cantaloupe
14. Cauliflower
15. Sweet Potatoes

Last, I'll leave you with my favorite quote on healthy food choices:

**Eat Food, Not Too Much, Mostly Plants!**

Michael Pollan  
Author: *The Omnivore's Dilemma*