

Ten Winning Foods

By Karen McCoy

The next time you are out grocery shopping, make sure you add some of the following foods to your shopping list. They can play a large role in your quality of life!

1. **Tomatoes** contain a very powerful antioxidant called lycopene. This antioxidant is probably the most powerful antioxidant among the carotenoids. Lycopene can be a powerful force in reducing the risk of prostate cancer and other cancers of the digestive tract. Tomatoes are best assimilated from cooked tomatoes and tomato sauce. (Research indicates that it's more effective when the tomatoes have been cooked.)

2. **Oats** can be a big player in lowering your cholesterol levels. They contain beta-glucan, a spongy, soluble fiber that can help clean up precursors of cholesterol. New evidence suggests that oats may lower blood pressure in hypertension patients as well as make you feel full fast, which should keep you away from those fattening foods.



3. **Wild Salmon** is important for heart health. It contains a special kind of fat called omega-3 fatty acids, which prevent platelets in the blood from clumping together and sticking to the artery walls. Omega-3s can also drive down the bad cholesterol, the low density lipoprotein (LDL). Research also suggests that omega-3s may block the production of inflammatory substances linked to autoimmune diseases which include lupus and rheumatoid arthritis. Studies also suggest that omega-3 fatty

acids interact with fat layers that surround brain cells and can help protect the brain from diseases such as Alzheimer's.

4. **Spinach** is loaded with iron, folate (folic acid) and two phytochemicals (lutein and zeaxanthin). Studies suggest that folate lowers blood levels of homocysteine, which has been linked to the prevention of heart disease. The phytochemicals seem to ward off macular degeneration, a leading cause of blindness.



5. **Nuts** contain lots of fat but don't worry, it's the good kind. These fats lower levels of triglycerides and LDL while raising HDL, the good cholesterol. Nuts also contain a phytochemical called ellagic acid, which studies have shown may trigger a process known as apoptosis, in which cancer cells kill themselves. They're also rich in vitamin E, a powerful antioxidant. You may want to lower your consumption because nuts can be high in calories.

6. **Garlic** is a big player in the promotion of good health. Garlic contains sulfur-based compounds which protect the heart. Studies suggest that these sulfides can reduce cholesterol and may make the blood less sticky. On top of this, garlic has antibacterial and antifungal properties. Garlic may even block parasites that cause malaria. Raw garlic is best, as cooking can destroy some of its beneficial substances (1 to 2 cloves a day is good). It's best to smashed or mince it, as this releases all the good stuff from the clove.



7. **Green Tea** is highly recommended, because it's loaded with polyphenols (a class of phytochemicals) called catechins, which may inhibit the growth of new blood vessels. This may help prevent cancer by depriving early tumors of nourishment. Catechins also prevent DNA damage, which can prevent cancer in the first place.



8. **Blueberries** are one of my favourites because they may contain more antioxidants than any other fruit or vegetable. The most powerful compounds in blueberries are anthocyanins. These phytochemicals may boost brainpower as well as combat free-radical damage linked to heart disease and cancer.

9. **Red Wine** is yet another important player in our health. The skins from the grapes contain antioxidants, which boosts your good cholesterol. The latest studies suggest red wine may inhibit the production of endothelin 1, a peptide that contributes to the hardening of the arteries. Although red wine has many benefits, you should keep your consumption level to no more than 5 to 10 glasses a week (and not all at once!). A drink or two every other day is the best (and most enjoyable) way to enjoy the benefits of red wine.



10. **Broccoli** is a great friend of our bodies because it contains suloraphine and indole-3 carbinol, which may detoxify cancer-causing substances before they have a chance to cause harm. Broccoli also contains beta-carotene, fibre and vitamin C.

Bon Appétit!