

Newsflash

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Get Rid of That Stress

When you're chronically stressed your body produces an overabundance of hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol, which hike blood pressure and can damage artery walls over time. These hormones are also linked to weight gain and higher blood sugar levels, risk factors for heart disease and type 2 diabetes. It's hard to avoid stress altogether, but coping strategies such as deep, slow breathing, aerobic exercise, and yoga, and unwinding with a meditation, massage or music can help you manage tension and reduce associated health risks. Choose the strategies that fit into your life easily.



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The Power of Cruciferous Vegetables

When you think of cruciferous vegetables, you probably go straight to the usual suspects – broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage. However, the family of cruciferous foods, which is far bigger than many people realize, also includes Brussels sprouts, bok choy (Chinese cabbage), kale, broccoli rabe, turnips, rutabaga, radishes, arugula, watercress, mustard greens, and collard greens.

Cancer fighters

Cruciferous vegetables are sources of sulfur-containing compounds, glucosinolates, which makes them powerful cancer-fighting weapons once they are consumed.

Chopping or chewing cruciferous vegetables releases myrosinase, an enzyme that breaks down glucosinolates into biologically active compounds that inhibit the development of cancers of the bladder, breast, colon, liver, lung and stomach. These compounds help protect cells from DNA damage, induce cell death (apoptosis), and inhibit tumor blood vessel formation (angiogenesis) and tumor cell migration (needed for metastasis). They also have antiviral, antibacterial, and anti-inflammatory properties. These compounds are responsible for the pungent, taste associated with these vegetables.

Loaded with nutrients

Because these vegetables are in the same family, they share many of the same nutrients; however they vary in the amounts of vitamins and minerals they contain. The seven vegetables that are richest in these nutrients are: Kale, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, Rutabaga and Watercress.

Upping your intake

With their strong flavors, it's sometimes difficult to find interesting ways to fit these vegetables into your diet. Here are several tips:

- Use kale, arugula or watercress in your salad or sandwich instead of lettuce.
- Roast Brussels sprouts or cauliflower or broccoli florets with a few cloves of garlic and drizzle of olive oil for a quick and easy side dish.
- Mash cauliflower for a delicious alternative to mashed potatoes.
- Add bok choy or spicy mustard greens to a stir fry.
- Peel and cube rutabaga and/or turnips and roast in the oven along with carrots and potatoes.
- For a snack that's got a kick, dip sliced radishes into hummus.
- Add cooked, finely chopped broccoli or cauliflower to pasta sauce.

Medication caution

For those taking blood-thinning medications, such as warfarin (Coumadin), be aware that many of these vegetables are high in vitamin K. Vitamin K plays a significant role in blood clotting, and can interact negatively with blood-thinning or clot-preventing medications. You can still enjoy these vegetables if you keep your intake steady from day to day instead of eating a lot for a few days and then none for a few days. A consistent intake of these foods will enable your doctor to regulate your medication dose based on the amount of vitamin K you regularly consume.

3 Probiotic Foods You Should Be Eating

By now you've probably heard that a little bacteria in your food isn't always a bad thing. Beneficial live bacteria and yeasts, called probiotics, which are found in some foods, have been associated with many benefits; weight loss and improved digestion and immunity, among others. Some evidence suggests that probiotics may help shorten a bout of diarrhea and improve symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome. But more research is needed to support those claims and others.

Probiotic foods are made through the process of fermentation. As bacteria chemically alter the food – say, turning milk into yogurt – they secrete enzymes, organic acids, and proteins. Some of the potential health perks of probiotics may be due to those compounds. That's why food is a better choice than supplements.

The benefits people get from fermented foods come largely from improved digestibility and the nutrients the food provides. In many cases, fermentation adds nutritional value.

To get more gut-boosting bacteria, consider incorporating these three probiotic foods into your day.

SAUERKRAUT. Combine sliced cabbage with kosher salt, then cover. The bacteria present on the surface of the cabbage leaves will ferment the vegetable's natural sugars into lactic acid, creating sauerkraut. In addition to having healthy bacteria, sauerkraut is an excellent source of vitamin C. Kimchi is a similar fermented food.

Look for: Refrigerated products, such as Bubbies and Farmhouse Culture. Shelf-stable varieties are pasteurized, which kills the healthy bacteria.

Use it: To add tartness and crunch to a salad or for roasted vegetables and grains.

YOGURT. Yogurt is made when milk has been inoculated with friendly bacteria, usually *Lactobacillus bulgaricus* and *Streptococcus thermophiles*. The microbes alter the milk's natural sugar, lactose. That process thickens the yogurt, producing the sour, tart flavor you expect. It also makes yogurt less likely than milk to cause bloating, gas, and other digestive discomfort in lactose-intolerant people. The microbes essentially predigest the food. That makes it more pleasant to eat.

Look for: Plain yogurt made with live active cultures. Sweetened yogurt can pack as many as 3 teaspoons of added sugars; plain has natural sugars in the form of lactose. If you prefer flavored yogurt, add fruit or look for a low-sugar option, like Sigg's Icelandic Style Yogurt.

Use it: Top a bowl of plain yogurt with chopped tomatoes, cucumbers, black olives, and a sprinkle of the Middle Eastern herb blend za'atar.

TEMPEH. Adding microbial cultures to cooked soybeans results in this dense, chewy cake with a nutty texture. Tempeh is higher in protein and fiber than tofu, and some say it's easier to digest.

Look for: Shrink-wrapped packages near the tofu and meat alternatives in supermarkets. Some brands, such as Lightlife, have grains or seeds, which alter the texture and flavor.

Use it: Slice and marinate for 30 minutes in lower-sodium soy sauce (or tamari), rice-wine vinegar, and sesame oil. Pan-fry until golden. Serve with stir-fried vegetables.



Stand When You Can

Several studies in recent years have pointed out the health risks of something many of us do too much of: sitting.

Women who spend at least 6 hours of their free time sitting have a 10 percent greater risk of developing cancer – notably multiple myeloma, ovarian cancer, or invasive breast cancer – than women who spend less than 3 hours per day of their free time sitting. That's the finding of a 2015 American Cancer Society study published in *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention*.

A 2015 University of Toronto review of research found that sitting for about 11 hours per day was associated with an 18 percent higher risk of death from cardiovascular disease, a 17 percent higher risk of fatal cancers and a 91 percent higher risk for developing type 2 diabetes.

You might think that spending a few hours each week doing physical activities at the gym is the solution. But moving frequently throughout the day is most important.

If you usually sit for long stretches of time, say, while driving or watching tv, our experts recommend taking short activity breaks. Some research shows that moving around (or even standing up) for a few minutes every hour helps bring blood sugar, for example, closer to normal.