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Our January 2019 Newsletter for Healthy Living

Your Health - A New Year's Investment

Investing in your health requires spending the majority of your food budget on REAL foods, and only a small amount on processed foods. To help with your New Year's resolve to improve your diet, we've assembled a team of 20 foods known for their potent health benefits. Our top picks are foods that nourish your brain, heart, gut, muscles, immune system and more.

Topping the list of brain-boosting superfoods are foods high in healthy fats. This is not surprising considering your brain is mainly made up of fats. **1. Avocados** are a great source of healthy oleic acid (monounsaturated fat, also found in olive oil), which helps decrease inflammation. Avocados have



also been shown to effectively combat nearly every aspect of metabolic syndrome, a risk factor of dementia and most other chronic disease. Avocados also

provide nearly 20 essential nutrients, including potassium, which helps balance your vitally important potassium to sodium ratio. **2. Organic coconut oil** Besides being excellent for your thyroid and your metabolism, its medium-chain fatty acids (MCTs) are a source of ketone bodies, which act as an alternate source of brain fuel that can help prevent the brain atrophy associated with dementia. MCTs also impart a number of health benefits, including raising your body's metabolism and fighting off pathogens.

3. Grass fed butter. About 20 percent of butterfat consists of short- and medium-chain fatty acids, which are used right away for quick energy and therefore don't contribute to fat levels in your blood. Therefore, a significant portion of the butter you consume is used immediately for energy, similar to a carbohydrate. **4. Organic pastured eggs.** Many of the healthiest foods are rich in choles-

terol and saturated fats, and eggs are no exception. Cholesterol is needed for the regulation of protein pathways involved in cell signaling and other cellular processes. It's particularly important for your brain, which contains about 25 percent of the cholesterol in your body.

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5. Wild-caught Alaskan salmon and other small, fatty fish, such as sardines and anchovies, are high in omega-3 fats necessary for optimal brain (and heart) health. Research also suggests eating oily fish once or twice a week may increase your life span. **6. Organic raw nuts such as macadamia and pecans.** Macadamia nuts have the highest fat and lowest protein and carb content of any nut, and about 60 percent of the fat is the monounsaturated fat oleic acid. A single serving of macadamia nuts also provides 58 percent of the R.D.A. in manganese and 23 percent of thiamine. Pecans are a close second to macadamia nuts on the fat and protein scale, and they also contain anti-inflammatory magnesium, heart

healthy oleic acid, phenolic antioxidants and immune-boosting manganese. Like your brain, your heart needs healthy fats, so all of the foods just mentioned will benefit your heart as well. Additionally, the following three are known for their cardiovascular benefits: **7. Beets, raw or fermented.** Research shows beets have powerful health benefits, courtesy of their high nitrate

content. Your body transforms nitrates into nitric oxide, which enhances oxygenation and blood flow and has a beneficial impact on your circulatory and immune systems. Research shows raw beet juice can lower blood pressure by an average of four to five points in just a few hours. Fermented beets (kvass) are lower in sugar content and are a great source of healthy probiotics. **8. Arugula,** a relative of the cruciferous family of vegetables, contains flavonoids known to help improve blood vessel function, increase blood flow, lower blood pressure and lower inflammation. With a tangy, slightly peppery kick, arugula is a tasty addition to just about any meal. **9. Sprouts, microgreens and baby greens** Harvesting greens before they reach maturity results in nutrient-dense plant foods that allow you to eat less in volume and dramatically improve your nutrition. According to research by the U.S. Department of Agriculture

continued on page 3

What's Inside This Issue

- Choose Your Fat Wisely
- January Specials
- A New Year's Investment, *reprinted by popular demand*
- January Monthly Coupon

Choose Your Fat Wisely

Regulating blood sugar has become a high priority for an increasing number of people, not just in the U.S., but worldwide. In fact, medical experts say diabetes affects more than 30 million people in the U.S. However, there's hope for people with high blood sugar, but it requires simple lifestyle tweaking to reduce individual risk.

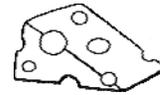
public but by the medical community, which is most likely why Mozaffarian was prompted to add, "Our findings, measuring biomarkers of fatty acids consumed in dairy fat, suggest a need to reexamine the potential metabolic benefits of dairy fat or foods rich in dairy fat, such as cheese."

The study, published in PLOS

ited; the recommendation is no more than three servings per day, and it should be either fat-free or low-fat to avoid raising your LDL cholesterol and, subsequently (and again misguidedly), a heightened heart disease risk. If followed, the recommended dairy consumption would equal 1 teaspoon of butter, one 15-gram (approximately a half-ounce) of cheese, 1 cup of yogurt or an 8-ounce glass of milk.

But now, there's a major shift:

"Indeed, research is mounting that saturated fat is better for you than processed carbohydrates like sugar and white bread, which have been linked to diabetes, obesity and heart disease many times over ... Other studies have also shown that full-fat products like dairy can be useful in weight maintenance and other health factors."



Mozzafarian notes that different foods are made up of different nutrients,

so that while we may be eating cheese, butter, yogurt, milk and meat, it's not altogether correct to say we're consuming calcium, fat and protein. In fact, there's a huge difference between the fat in a pat of butter and what's present in a pastrami sandwich. The reason, he explains, is that: *"Processed meats may have different effects on stroke and heart disease, not because of the saturated fat, but because of sodium and the preservatives. In the end, just making decisions about a food based on one thing like saturated fat is not useful."*

However, it's not a good idea to choose just any old dairy product from the dairy section of your local supermarket. Conventionally-produced dairy products are alarmingly out of balance in regard to omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids, which creates a greater risk for chronic disease, not to mention the problems that stem from CAFOs (concentrated animal feeding operations), such as ingesting the antibiotics the cows have been given, as well as hormones and genetically engineered (GE) organisms. Instead, for optimal flavor and nutritional benefits, choose raw, organic and grass fed (rather than grain-fed) options when you're looking for milk, cheese, butter and yogurt.

"...research is mounting that saturated fat is better for you than processed carbohydrates."

Most predominant in the methods you can adopt to reduce your risk of developing diabetes or multiplying the health risks associated with this condition is changing your eating habits. You can even alleviate the symptoms and regulate the high blood sugar levels linked to diabetes, and it's often just as much about the foods you eat as the foods you stay away from. In a recent study, researchers from the University of Cambridge School of Clinical Medicine revealed that a few choice foods, which some "experts" have previously warned against, can be eaten or reintroduced into your diet to lower your Type 2 diabetes risk. This includes butter, yogurt and cheese.

Lead author Fumiaki Imamura, from the Medical Research Council (MRC) Epidemiology Unit at Cambridge, asserts: *"Our results provide the most comprehensive global evidence to date about dairy fat biomarkers and their relationship with lower risk of Type 2 diabetes. We're aware that our biomarker work has limitations and requires further research on underlying mechanisms, but at the very least, the available evidence about dairy fat does not indicate any increased risk for the development of Type 2 diabetes."*

Senior study author Dariush Mozaffarian, dean of the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, notes that dairy foods are recommended as part of a healthy diet, both in the U.S. and internationally and, more specifically, that consumption of dairy products such as yogurt and cheese is linked with a lower incidence of Type 2 diabetes. However, there's been confusion, lost context and misinformation in regard to consumption of saturated fat, including that found in dairy products, not only in the general

Medicine, was part of the Fatty Acids and Outcomes Research Consortium (FORCE), which describes its aim as "Understanding how fatty acid biomarkers relate to the risk of developing cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, obesity, cancers, chronic kidney disease, and other conditions." The scientists used data compiled from 16 studies to compare how nearly 64,000 adults were affected over 20 years. Their review found that the participants who didn't consume dairy products were more likely to develop the condition; in fact, 15,100 of them, free of diabetes at the outset, went on to develop Type 2 diabetes during the 20-year follow-up. Conversely, "those with higher concentrations of dairy-fat biomarkers had less chance of contracting the condition."

Further: *"When all the results of the 16 studies were pooled the researchers found that higher concentrations of dairy-fat biomarkers were associated with lower risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. This lower risk was independent of other major risk factors for Type 2 diabetes including age, sex, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, physical activity and obesity. For example, if people among the top fifth of the concentrations of dairy-fat markers were compared with people among the bottom fifth of the concentrations, the top-fifth people had an approximately 30 percent lower risk of Type 2 diabetes."*

The crux of the new research means eating cheese may help lower your Type 2 diabetes risk, even while acknowledging that millions of consumers are following misguided dietary guidelines, concentrated on the errant associations linking dairy products with calories and "bad fat." Current (and faulty) guidelines maintain that saturated fat found in dairy foods should be lim-

in which 25 different microgreens were evaluated, all were found to have higher nutritional densities than their full-grown counterparts, including 10 times higher amounts of valuable antioxidant compounds.

“...ginger may protect against a range of chronic diseases...due to its beneficial effects on oxidative stress and inflammation.”

Mounting evidence reveals there's more to nutrition than previously thought — a large component of it actually revolves around nourishing the health-promoting bacteria in your body, thereby keeping harmful microbes in check. One of the reasons a healthy diet is able to influence your health is because it helps create an optimal environment for beneficial bacteria in your gut, while decreasing pathogenic or disease-causing bacteria, fungi and yeast. Your top teammates in this category are: **10. Grass-fed kefir.** This cultured milk product, which is loaded with probiotics, also contains fiber, which is another important source of nourishment for the healthy bacteria in your gut. **11. Fermented vegetables.** One of the best and least expensive ways to optimize your gut microbiome is to eliminate sugars and processed sugars and eat traditionally fermented foods. Kefir is one; fermented vegetables are another. You can easily ferment just about any vegetable you like – and they're a great source of vitamin K2. **12. Organic bone broth.** Bone broth is one of the oldest meals on record, and it may also be one of the most healing. It is very easily digested, and contains profound immune-boosters including bioavailable minerals, collagen, silicon, components of bone and bone marrow, glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate and the conditionally essential amino acids proline, glycine and glutamine. Bone broth is best made at home from scratch, using organic grass fed bones. **13. Organic psyllium** is a dietary fiber that helps nourish healthy bacteria in your gut, reduces intestinal inflammation, and may provide some relief from irritable bowel syndrome.

While several of the foods already listed could belong in this section, two potent anti-inflammatory spices worthy of special mention are: **14. Turmeric.** Nicknamed the "spice of life," its bioactive compound, curcumin, has been found to help maintain a healthy diges-

tive system, modulate some 700 genes, positively control more than 160 different physiological pathways, improve the orderliness of cell membranes, and directly interact with inflammatory molecules to help lower inflammation.

15. Ginger is also well-known for its medicinal qualities. The Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences recently published a review showing ginger may protect against a wide range of chronic diseases, in part due to its beneficial effects on oxidative stress and inflammation. Your immune system is the first-line defense against all disease, and a majority of your immune function resides or starts in your gut. Hence, all the gut-healthy foods already mentioned will help boost your immune function.

In addition to those, the following two categories are worthy of special note: **16. Allium vegetables — garlic and onions.** The unique scent emitted by allium vegetables when cut comes from sulfur-containing compounds such as allicin, which have many health-promoting effects. Studies have demonstrated garlic may inhibit a vast array of diseases by reducing inflammation, boosting immune function and improving cardiovascular health. Onions also have a wealth of beneficial properties, and are especially rich in quercetin, a powerful antioxidant with antihistamine and anti-inflammatory properties that may help fight chronic diseases like allergies, heart disease and cancer.

17. Mushrooms. Aside from being rich in protein, fiber, vitamins B and C, calcium and minerals, mushrooms are excellent sources of antioxidants, including antioxidants that are unique to mushrooms, such as ergothioneine, recognized as a "master antioxidant." A study in the journal *Nature* discussed the importance of ergothioneine, which appears to have a very specific role in protecting DNA from oxidative damage.

Proteins are found in every cell in your body. These chains of amino acids are important for repair, maintenance and growth of cells, and are essential for healthy muscles, organs, glands and skin. As protein is broken down and used up in your body, you must replace it by consuming protein via your diet.

When it comes to protein-rich, muscle-boosting foods, quality matters. Two of the top contenders here are: **18. Grass-fed beef.** Compared to conventional beef, grass-fed beef tends to have significantly better omega-6 to omega-3 ratios, higher concentrations of conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) and antioxidants, and a lower risk of being contaminated with antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

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19. Whey protein, a byproduct of milk and cheese (often referred to as the gold standard of protein), was promoted for its health benefits by Hippocrates as early as 420 B.C. Besides providing all of the essential amino acids your body needs, high-quality whey protein from organically-raised, grass-fed cows also contains three ingredients of particular importance for health: leucine, glutathione and CLA. Both leucine and CLA can be helpful if you're trying to lose weight, while glutathione boosts your overall health by protecting your cells and mitochondria from oxidative damage.

Last, but not the least, of our healthy foods teammates is **20. Broccoli (and other cruciferous vegetables).** Thanks to plant compounds such as sulforaphane and glucoraphanin, three servings of broccoli per week may reduce your risk of certain cancers by more than 60 percent. It's also an anti-inflammatory and encourages production of enzymes capable of reducing reactive oxygen species by as much as 73 percent. And the best news is – like all of these healthy teammates – it tastes great!

Reference: *Nutrition Journal* December 2012; 11:106. *Journal of Agriculture and Food Chemistry* August 8, 2012; 60(31): 7644-51. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* May 15, 2017. The Vegetarian Site: All About Allium Vegetables. *Nature* 2010; 17:



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