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What are the health benefits of popular foods?

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Though the field of medicine continues to advance and branch out in so many ways, nutritionists and health experts continue to praise the benefits of certain foods. In fact, eating healthfully has been shown to reduce the risk of [obesity](#), cardiovascular illnesses and even certain types of [cancer](#).

However, understanding which foods to eat for specific benefits can sometimes be difficult, which is why *Medical News Today* previously supplied a list of the [top 10 healthy foods](#).

Now, *MNT* specifies the health benefits of a much wider range of foods, providing a cornucopia of delicious and nutritious options for individuals who wish to boost their health by eating healthfully.

Food products mentioned in this article include: [almonds](#), [apples](#), [asparagus](#), [bananas](#), [basil](#), [broccoli](#), [carrots](#), [celery](#), [chocolate](#), [cinnamon](#), [cranberries](#), [flaxseed](#), [garlic](#), [ginger](#), [grapes](#), [green tea](#), [honey](#), [kale](#), [kiwifruit](#), [oats](#), [oily fish](#), [olive oil](#), [oranges](#), [oregano](#), [peppermint](#), [rosemary](#), [sage](#), [spearmint](#), [spinach](#), [strawberries](#), [thyme](#), [tomatoes](#) and [watermelons](#).

Below is a list of the food products along with information regarding their potential health benefits:

Almonds



Almonds are a rich source of [vitamin E](#), copper, magnesium, good quality protein, and healthy unsaturated fatty acids.

Studies have revealed that almonds can potentially help prevent cardiovascular heart diseases, cut the risk of cancer, and help prolong life.

[Read more about almonds.](#)

Apples



Apples are sometimes called "nutritional powerhouses" because of their impressive nutritional profile.

Apples are rich in Vitamin C (a powerful natural antioxidant), B-complex vitamins, dietary fiber, phytonutrients (which help protect the body from the detrimental effects of free radicals), and minerals such as [calcium](#) and potassium.*

Studies have revealed that eating apples can potentially help prevent [dementia](#)*, reduce your risk of [stroke](#)*, and reduce your risk of [diabetes](#)*

[Read more about apples.](#)

Asparagus



Asparagus is very rich in dietary fiber and contains high levels of vitamin B6, calcium, zinc and magnesium.

The potential health benefits of asparagus include: reducing the risk of diabetes, preventing

kidney stones, and reducing the risk of neural tube defects in babies.

[Read more about asparagus.](#)

Bananas



Bananas are naturally free of fat, [cholesterol](#) and sodium and is very rich in potassium.

The potential health benefits of bananas include: lowering [blood pressure](#), reduce the risk of developing childhood [leukemia](#), and supporting heart health.

[Read more about bananas.](#)

Basil



Basil is rich in vitamin A, vitamin K, vitamin C, magnesium, iron, potassium, and calcium.

Studies have revealed that basil can potentially reduce [inflammation](#) and swelling, prevent the

harmful effects of aging¹⁴, and may be useful in treating [arthritis](#) and inflammatory bowel diseases.¹¹

[Read more about basil.](#)

Broccoli



Broccoli contains high levels of fiber (both soluble and insoluble) and is a rich source of vitamin-C.

In addition, broccoli is rich in vitamin A, iron, vitamin K, B-complex vitamins, zinc, phosphorus and phyto-nutrients.

Studies have found that broccoli can potentially help prevent osteoarthritis¹², protect your skin against the effects of UV light¹³, reverse diabetes heart damage¹⁴, and reduce bladder cancer risk.¹⁵

[Read more about broccoli.](#)

Carrots



Carrots are a great source of vitamin A. They provide 210% of the average adult's needs for the day.

The potential health benefits of carrots include: preventing [lung cancer](#)[®], destroying leukemia cells and inhibiting their progression[™], and helping to restore vision.[®]

[Read more about carrots.](#)

Celery



Celery is a very rich source of antioxidants and vitamin K.

The potential health benefits of celery include: lowering blood pressure, preventing cancer, and soothing joint pain.

[Read more about celery.](#)

Chocolate



Chocolate is rich in antioxidants. Despite its bad reputation for causing weight gain, there are a number of health benefits being associated with its consumption.

The potential benefits of eating chocolate are said to include: lowering cholesterol levels, preventing cognitive decline, and reducing the risk of cardiovascular problems.

[Read more about chocolate.](#)

Cinnamon



Studies have found that cinnamon can potentially be effective against [HIV](#)¹⁹, improve glucose and lipids levels in patients with type 2 diabetes²⁰, help prevent [Alzheimer's disease](#),²¹ and stop the destructive process of [multiple sclerosis](#) (MS).²²

In addition, researchers at Penn State found that consuming cinnamon can help reduce the body's negative responses to eating high-fat meals.²³

[Read more about cinnamon.](#)

Coffee



Coffee is one of the main sources of antioxidants in the U.S.

The potential health benefits of drinking coffee include: protecting against type 2 diabetes²⁶, preventing [Parkinson's disease](#)²⁵, lowering the risk of [liver cancer](#)²⁶, preventing liver disease²⁷, and promoting good heart health.²⁸

[Read more about coffee.](#)

Cranberries



Cranberries are a good source of vitamin C, fiber and vitamin E.

Studies have found that cranberries can potentially be effective at reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD)²⁹, slowing [tumor](#) progression³⁰, preventing [urinary tract infections](#)³¹, and can benefit oral health by preventing bacteria from binding to teeth.

[Read more about cranberries.](#)

Flaxseed



Flaxseed is not only "an excellent source of two fatty acids that are essential for human health - linoleic acid and alpha-linolenic acid," but also "an excellent source of fiber and a good source of minerals and vitamins", according to the American Nutrition Association.³²

The potential health benefits associated with flaxseed include: lowering cholesterol³³, protecting against cancer³⁴, preventing hot flashes³⁵, and improving blood sugar levels.³⁶

[Read more about flaxseed.](#)

Garlic



Garlic is widely used for several conditions linked to the blood system and heart.

Studies have found that garlic can potentially be a very powerful [antibiotic](#)³⁷, help protect the heart during cardiac surgery and after a [heart attack](#)³⁸, lower the risk of developing lung cancer³⁹, and reduce high cholesterol and blood pressure levels.⁴⁰

[Read more about garlic.](#)

Ginger



Ginger contains a chemical which is used as an ingredient in antacid, laxative and anti-gas medications.

Studies have found that ginger can potentially prevent inflammation of the colon⁴³, reduce exercise-induced muscle pain⁴⁴, help alleviate nausea caused by [chemotherapy](#)⁴⁵, and reduce the severity of [period pains](#).⁴⁶

[Read more about ginger.](#)

Grapes



The portability, texture, flavor and variety of grapes have made them a popular finger food in countries all over the world.

Studies have associated grapes with the prevention of cancer, [heart disease](#), [high blood](#)

[pressure](#) and [constipation](#) as well as decreasing the risk of obesity and overall mortality.

[Read more about grapes.](#)

Green Tea



Green tea may well be one of the world's healthiest drinks and contains the highest amount of antioxidants of any tea.

Studies have found that drinking green tea is associated with a reduced risk of stroke⁴¹, and may help fight [prostate cancer](#).⁴²

[Read more about green tea.](#)

Honey



Honey possesses antiseptic and antibacterial properties.

Studies have found that honey can potentially help prevent [GERD](#)(gastroesophageal reflux)⁴³,

shorten the duration of bacterial [diarrhea](#)⁴⁶, help heal burns⁴⁶, minimize seasonal allergies⁴⁶, and fight off infections.⁴¹

[Read more about honey.](#)

Kale



Kale is a great source of vitamin K, vitamin A, [beta carotene](#), calcium, and vitamin C.

The potential health benefits of kale include: reducing the risk of certain cancers, lowering the risk of [coronary artery disease](#), and lowering levels of bad cholesterol.

[Read more about kale.](#)

Kiwifruit



Kiwis are a nutrient dense food, meaning they are high in nutrients and low in calories. The kiwifruit is higher in vitamin C per ounce than most other fruits.

The potential health benefits of eating kiwis include: maintaining healthy skin tone and texture,

reducing blood pressure and preventing heart disease and stroke..

[Read more about kiwifruit.](#)

Oats



Oats contain high levels of a type of fiber known as beta-glucan. Beta-glucan is known to help lower levels of bad cholesterol.

The potential health benefits of oats include: reducing the risk of coronary artery disease, lowering the risk of [colorectal cancer](#), and lowering blood pressure.

[Read more about oats.](#)

Oily fish



Oily fish, such as salmon or mackerel, are an excellent source of [omega-3](#) oils and lean protein.

Potential health benefits of eating oily fish include: preventing cardiovascular disease⁵⁶, reducing your risk of [rheumatoid arthritis](#)⁵⁵, boosting infant sensory, cognitive, and motor development⁵⁴, improving memory⁵⁵, protecting vision⁵⁶, and preventing oral and [skin cancers](#).⁵⁷

[Read more about oily fish.](#)

Olive oil



People who regularly consume olive oil are at a lower risk of developing cardiovascular diseases, including [hypertension](#) (high blood pressure), stroke, and hyperlipidemia (high blood cholesterol and triglyceride levels).⁵⁸

In addition, olive oil intake may help treat inflammation, endothelial dysfunction (problems with the inner linings of blood vessels), thrombosis and [carbohydrate](#) metabolism.⁵⁸

[Read more about olive oil.](#)

Oranges



An orange has over 170 different phytochemicals and more than 60 flavonoids, many of which have been shown to have anti-inflammatory properties and strong antioxidant effects.

Oranges also contain thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, vitamin B-6, folate, pantothenic acid, phosphorus, magnesium, manganese, selenium and copper. Because of their high vitamin C content (over twice the daily need) oranges are associated with boosting the immune system.

[Read more about oranges.](#)

Oregano



Oregano is a rich source of vitamin K and dietary antioxidants.

Studies have found that oregano has antimicrobial activity⁵⁹, anti-inflammatory properties⁶⁰, and components in oregano may help slow down or prevent the progression of disease in patients with [breast cancer](#).⁶¹

[Read more about oregano.](#)

Peppermint



Peppermint is used as a traditional or folk remedy for several conditions and illnesses because of its calming effects.

The potential health benefits of peppermint include: treating the symptoms of [irritable bowel syndrome](#) (IBS)⁶², calming skin irritation and itchiness, preventing the onset of [headaches](#) and associated symptoms.⁶³

[Read more about peppermint.](#)

Rosemary



Rosemary is a rich source of antioxidants and anti-inflammatory compounds.

Studies have found that rosemary may potentially help treat [indigestion](#)⁶⁴, enhance memory and concentration⁶⁵, provide neurological protection⁶⁶, and provide protection against [macular degeneration](#).⁶⁷

[Read more about rosemary.](#)

Sage



Sage is rich in antioxidants (apigenin, diosmetin, and luteolin) and important nutrients, such

as vitamin K.

Studies have found that sage may potentially improve memory and information processing among people who suffer from mild Alzheimer's disease⁶⁶, and help lower cholesterol and triglyceride levels in patients with diabetes type 2.⁶⁸

[Read more about sage.](#)

Spearmint



Spearmint contains high amounts of vitamins, antioxidants and other vital nutrients.

Studies have found that spearmint may potentially have antioxidant and antifungal properties⁷⁰, reduce symptoms of nausea and other digestive problems⁷¹, and treat hirsutism (abnormal hair growth).⁷²

[Read more about spearmint.](#)

Spinach



Spinach one of the best sources of dietary magnesium and calcium.

The potential health benefits of spinach include: helping manage diabetes, helping preventing cancer, reducing the risk of [asthma](#), lowering the risk of blood pressure, and improving bone health.

[Read more about spinach.](#)

Strawberries



Strawberries are one of the most popular, refreshing and healthy treats on the planet and contain many vitamins and antioxidants that can be beneficial for your health.

The potential health benefits of strawberries include: reducing the risk of heart disease, stroke, cancer, blood pressure, constipation, allergies, diabetes and [depression](#).

[Read more about strawberries.](#)

Thyme



Thyme preparations may be more effective than [acne](#) prescription creams, according to scientists at Leeds Metropolitan University in England.⁷³

Studies have found that thyme may potentially protect against hypertension⁷⁴, help fight off foodborne bacterial infections⁷⁵, and induce cell death in the breast cancer cells.⁷⁶

[Read more about thyme.](#)

Tomatoes



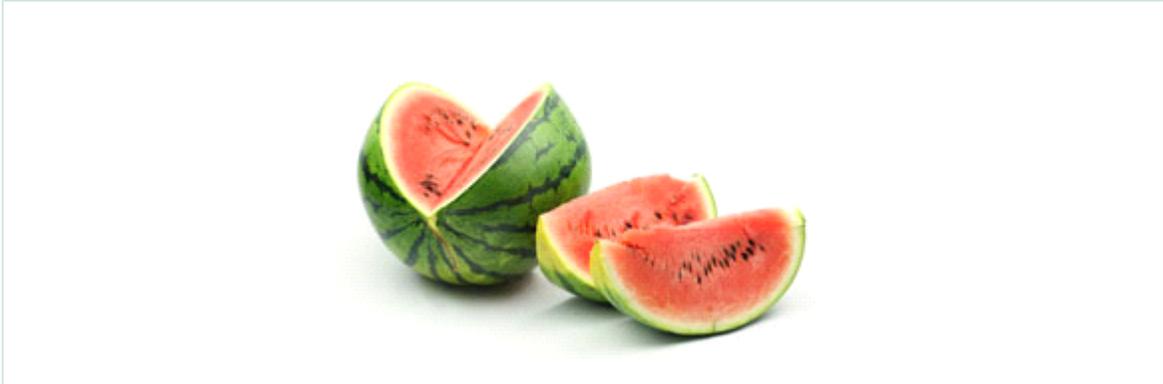
The tomato has been referred to as a "functional food," a food that goes beyond providing just basic [nutrition](#), additionally preventing chronic disease and delivering other health benefits, due to beneficial phytochemicals such as lycopene.

Tomatoes are a rich source of vitamins A and C and [folic acid](#). Tomatoes contain a wide array of beneficial nutrients and antioxidants, including alpha-lipoic acid, lycopene, choline, folic acid, beta-carotene and lutein.

The benefits of consuming fruits and vegetables of all kinds, including tomatoes, are infinite. As plant food consumption goes up, the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and cancer goes down.

[Read more about tomatoes.](#)

Watermelons



Watermelons are a very good source of vitamin C and vitamin A (which promotes good eyesight).

The potential health benefits of watermelons include: preventing cardiovascular disease[™], and relieving muscle soreness.[™]

[Read more about watermelons.](#)

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