

Ten Foods With Special Powers

Here are ten foods that can protect your heart and bones and even fight cancer.

1. **Black tea** With all the talk about how good green tea is for you, don't forget to drink black tea. Black tea comes from the same antioxidant-rich plant that the green tea leaves come from. Black tea can also protect you from heart disease and some cancers. One study showed that people with heart disease saw a 50% improvement in impaired blood vessels. Have it hot at breakfast and iced for lunch. When brewing your own, use boiling water and steep for three minutes. There is no anti-oxidant value in instant teas. Make it yourself and drink it fresh.
2. **Celery** Even though celery is known to be nutritionally incomplete, it does have potassium. Potassium helps reduce blood pressure and regulate fluids and minerals in the body. Most Americans get less than they need. When you think of potassium, you think of bananas. Four pieces of celery have 24 calories, but a banana has 105 calories. Pre-cut your snack size celery. Keep it in ice water to keep it fresh (in the fridge). Dip the pieces in salsa or peanut butter. Add celery to soups, stews and stir-fry.
3. **Cherries** Cherries have large amounts of flavonoids. This is a powerful anti-oxidant. Sweet and sour cherries are also rich in anthocyanins, a micro-nutrient that can help the immune system fight disease-causing free radicals. Buy cherries, in season, from May through August, or dried, canned or frozen. Freeze some for a cool treat. Add dried cherries to salads, or in pancakes.
4. **Edamame** This is the whole unprocessed soybean. It is sold frozen in or out of the pod. They are crunchy green beans that have all the good qualities of tofu. They also have large amounts of folate, fiber, and potassium. Boil them in the pod, sprinkle with salt and eat them warm or cold. You can eat them raw in salads. You can also roast them, when shelled, with olive oil and seasoned salt. Cook them at 375 degrees for 10 to 15 minutes. When roasted, they form a good healthy snack.
5. **Mushrooms** Mushrooms are low in calories, and a good source of riboflavin. They contain chitin and beta-glucan, 2 types of fiber. They can lower your risk for heart disease, as they remove and absorb fat from the blood. Grill portobello mushrooms like burgers, serve on rolls. Mix mushrooms in salads, risotto, saute them or add them to pizza.
6. **Onions** Onions are good for your heart. They can thin your blood like aspirin. Onions fight bacteria that can cause stomach cancer. Eat the onions raw. It is the best way! When you cook them, their blood-thinning compounds are lost. Try sliced onion on a sandwich, or in a salad. Grilling is also good. You can also saute them in olive oil.
7. **Pomegranate juice** A no-hassle way to get your antioxidants. Pomegranate juice is now sold in the supermarket, in many varieties. Pomegranates have more antioxidants than red wine, green tea, cranberry juice, and orange juice. In one study it was found, that pomegranate juice reversed some carotid artery damage. Drinking less than 2 ounces a day is all you need. Mix the juice with sparkling water or fresh tea.
8. **Quinoa** Quinoa, a grain-like seed, is close to the perfect food. It has 20 amino acids, including the ones needed to repair tissues. It also has magnesium, which lowers blood pressure. All you have to eat is 1/2 cup per day. Boil quinoa, and use it instead of brown rice. You can eat it like breakfast oatmeal, with milk or jelly or syrup.
9. **Sunflower seeds** Sunflower seeds have more Vitamin E than almonds. They are a great snack, and can help reduce your risk for stroke and heart disease. Eat at least 2 ounces and you will get 12 milligrams of Vitamin E. They also have fiber, protein and iron. Add shelled seeds to your salads, baked muffins or cake, or meat loaf. You can crush them, add some olive oil and coat baked chicken or fish.
10. **Whole-grain cereal** Eat shredded wheat and you will feel full all morning. It can help lower cholesterol, thereby lowering your risk of heart disease. It has good carbs and gives you energy. Have a bowl for breakfast, or a snack, or even dinner.

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