

# Natural Health News

## Top 5 Foods Every Woman Should Know

You are meandering up and down the aisles of your favorite local grocery store, trying to figure it out: What am I supposed to eat?!? As a health conscious consumer, you know that you are what you eat, and you want to select foods that will make you feel great and keep you healthy for years to come. You are diligently reading labels and trying your best to separate out nutritional truth from marketing fluff. Sticking mostly to the perimeter of the store and concentrating on organic fresh foods from the produce and bulk sections, you do your best to avoid the false sense of “healthy” coming from those organic vegan fat-free gluten-free brownies.

Whether healthy eating is new to you or you’ve been working on your diet for years, it will be helpful to know that there is a lot of research now to prove the health benefits of many foods. Here are the top 5 foods that I encourage my patients to eat to promote health, prevent disease, and increase vitality.

### **Berries**

Blackberries, blueberries, strawberries, raspberries and cranberries are all good choices. These fruits are low on the glycemic index so they are easy

on blood sugar, and they are packed with antioxidants to protect against heart disease, eye and nerve damage, and cellular degeneration throughout the body. Raspberry leaf tea is a great women’s tonic and smooth muscle relaxant (good for menstrual cramps). Unsweetened cranberry juice helps to stave off bladder infections and kidney stones.

### **Broccoli**

The cruciferous (or brassica) family of veggies provides great liver detoxification support. This family includes such delights as broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, turnip, mustard greens, kale, rutabaga, kohlrabi, and collard greens. These foods are the dietary source of indole-3-carbinol which aids in the safe metabolism and breakdown of estrogen, and has been shown to lower the risk of breast cancer.

### **Coconut Oil**

Many people are surprised to hear that coconut oil is a healthy choice. Yes, it is a saturated fat, but we actually do need some saturated fat in our diets. Instead, you need to carefully avoid trans fats. Coconut oil is great for cooking because it resists the heat damage that occurs to polyunsaturated vegetable oils.

Because of its high content of medium-chain triglycerides (MCTs) it is easy to digest and enables the body to burn fat for energy. This makes it a great weight loss food that also helps to maintain healthy cholesterol levels and lower the risk of heart disease. The main type of MCT found in coconut oil is lauric acid, which is the same substance in breast milk that helps to strengthen the immune system.

### **Flax Seeds (Ground)**

Among the variety of healthy nuts and seeds, flax plays a special role. Flax oil is a tasty and balanced source of both omega 3 and omega 6 oils. What makes flax so unique, however, is the high dose of lignans in the fiber. This component is best obtained from grinding the seeds into a powder which can be sprinkled over foods or mixed into drinks. The lignans promote healthy hormone balance while increasing dietary fiber to aid digestive function and prevent colon cancer. Eating 2 Tbs. per day can help with hot flashes, PMS, PCOS, diarrhea and constipation. Because it can be damaged by heat, flax should be stored in the fridge and eaten raw.

**Yogurt and Kefir**

Many people who have difficulty digesting dairy do fine with these fermented foods. If you can tolerate them, these foods are a great source of the good bacteria that we all need to maintain a healthy colon. Keeping a good balance of colonic flora promotes proper digestion and immune function to help with IBS, yeast infections, and recovery after antibiotics. Good sources of calcium and protein, these foods make a great snack or smoothie.

*Amy Day, ND*

**DID YOU KNOW . . . ?**

**Intravenous Nutrient Therapy Improves Fibromyalgia Symptoms**

Fibromyalgia is a chronic illness characterized by widespread pain, general fatigue and sleep problems. It is difficult to find safe and effective treatments as its causes are unclear. Fibromyalgia affects about 15 million Americans. A research study published in the May-June 2007 issue of *Alternative Therapy Health Medicine* looked at the effectiveness of using the “Myers Cocktail,” an intravenous combination of nutrients including vitamins B and C, magnesium, and calcium among others, in people with long-standing fibromyalgia and who had already tried conventional therapies without significant or lasting relief. Participants were treated weekly for 8 weeks and their levels of pain, fatigue and daily living activities were

evaluated weekly. People undergoing IV therapy noted improved energy levels within 24-48 hours of treatment, improved ability to participate in daily living activities, as well as a 60% reduction in pain and 80% decrease in fatigue. No side effects were noted in this study.

**More Research Finds Acupuncture Benefits Fertility and Pregnancy**

There seems to be much research going on these days looking at acupuncture’s effects on fertility and pregnancy, and the consensus is building that acupuncture is an important therapy for women trying to get pregnant or undergoing in-vitro fertilization (IVF). A 2006 study published in the journal *Fertility Sterility* looked at 116 patients receiving acupuncture in the weeks following IVF compared with a group of 109 patients who received “placebo” acupuncture. Treatments were done immediately following embryo transfer and 3 days later. Clinical pregnancy rate and ongoing pregnancy rate (33.6% and 28.4%) were significantly higher (virtually double) than in the placebo acupuncture group (15.6% and 13.8%).

Acupuncture also appears to facilitate natural birth. Scandinavian researchers studied 56 women at 39 weeks of pregnancy who were treated with 3 acupuncture treatments near their due dates to promote healthy labor. Compared with matched controls (women not receiving acupuncture treatment), women receiving acupuncture were more likely to

labor spontaneously and less likely to undergo Caesarean sections. Another recent study of 100 women with spontaneous rupture of membranes at term found that those who received acupuncture had reduced length of active labor and fewer required oxytocin to induce labor. In those who needed labor induced, women who had received acupuncture completed active labor in half the time as women not receiving acupuncture.

*Carl Hangee-Bauer, ND, LAc*

**SOMA Acupuncture & Natural Health Clinic**



Founded clinic in 1989. Integrates naturopathic medicine and acupuncture.

Carl Hangee-Bauer, ND, LAc



Amy Day, ND



Erika Horowitz, ND

Women’s health specialists



Michele Hangee-Bauer, Office Manager



Shannon Fitzsimons, Receptionist