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WELLSPRING

THE HEALTH MAGAZINE FOR THE JEWISH FAMILY

To Thank and To Praise...

COUNTING THEIR BLESSINGS IN THE LAB

Will practicing gratitude influence the health of this month's Samples?

CUP OF TEA WITH YECHIEL SCHRADER

A homeopath looks at the whole picture, not just one symptom

Ask Laura Shammah

KIDNEY STONE PREVENTION

Pediatric Nutrition

MY CHILD ISN'T CONSUMING ENOUGH PROTEIN. SHOULD I SUPPLEMENT WITH POWDER?

OUR CHANUKAH MENU

10 My Table contributors

DONUTS, REBRANDED

With delectable options like Authentic Lemon Donuts with Blueberry Finish, you won't feel deprived

New Mini-Column!

Demystified

ARE THOSE LATKES TO BLAME FOR YOUR ACNE?

BRING ON THE FATS

8 top sources of fat-soluble vitamins

FYI

THESE FOODS IMPROVE FOCUS AND CONCENTRATION

The Doctor Is In

BREAST CANCER PREVENTION

SWEET OR SAVORY?

We've got you covered with chicken donuts

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FATS NEEDED

8 TOP SOURCES OF FAT-SOLUBLE VITAMINS

By Esti Asher, MS, RDN, LD



Fats play an important role in a healthy and well-balanced diet. A few examples of the functions that fats help with are maintaining body temperature, serving as a secondary source of energy, and aiding in the absorption of fat-soluble vitamins. Fat-soluble vitamins include vitamins A, D, E, and K. Since Chanukah is a time where we generally find ourselves eating more fats and oils than usual (be sure to enjoy, and skip the guilt!), what an appropriate time to highlight foods that contain fat-soluble vitamins. By consuming these foods when our fat intake is higher than usual, we can be sure to maximize on their benefits.

Below are 8 top sources of foods containing fat-soluble vitamins.



Red Bell Pepper

Along with other fruits and vegetables in the red and orange family, red bell peppers contain beta carotene, which is then converted into vitamin A in the body. Vitamin A has many benefits, including being helpful for vision, the immune system, and growth and development. In addition to being rich in beta carotene, red bell peppers provide an abundant amount of vitamin C and other antioxidants.



Sweet Potatoes

Another example of a vegetable high in beta carotene, sweet potatoes get their beautiful vibrant color from carotenoids, which are also powerful antioxidants. In addition to providing a large amount of vitamin A, they are also rich in potassium and vitamin C, to name a few.



Salmon

An excellent example of a food rich in fat-soluble vitamin D, which plays many roles in a healthy body, including building and maintaining healthy bones and supporting immune health and muscle function. Salmon is also particularly beneficial for heart health and cognitive function.



Egg Yolks

While egg whites contain a lot of protein, egg yolks have many nutritional components, including vitamin D. Egg yolks also provide vitamins A, E, and K; many B vitamins; and minerals such as calcium, magnesium, potassium, zinc, and phosphorus.

Limiting simple carbohydrates may reduce GERD symptoms

Gastrointestinal esophageal reflux disease, also known as chronic acid reflux, is a common phenomenon experienced by nearly 20 percent of adults in the United States. People with this condition experience heartburn and previously swallowed foods repeatedly flowing back into the esophagus. Classic recommendations to help with GERD include avoiding foods such as citrus, chocolate, and tomato sauce, as well as lifestyle recommendations such as consuming small, frequent meals and not lying down too soon after eating. However, a new study suggests that limiting simple carbohydrates may help reduce GERD symptoms as well.

The study took place in Vanderbilt University in the form of a randomized control trial and was subsequently published in the *American Journal of Gastroenterology*. The findings suggested that limiting simple carbohydrates such as white bread, cakes, and cookies could reduce the severity and frequency of heartburn and other symptoms experienced with GERD. It is noteworthy that the researchers recommend reducing simple carbohydrates, as opposed to totally eliminating them; this recommendation is more practical and achievable, and may also lead to a higher quality of life.

Whole grain consumption linked to decreased risk of premature coronary artery disease

When it comes to heart health, nutrition recommendations are generally consistent: in order to eat in a way that is most helpful to the cardiovascular system, consumption of whole grains, fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and healthy fats is ideal. However, while these are general guidelines for overall heart health, a recent study focused on the impact of grain consumption on premature coronary artery disease (CAD) in particular.

Researchers analyzed data of 2,099 adults with premature CAD, using food frequency questionnaires to assess nutritional intake of the group. Women were 70 years or younger and men were 60 years or younger. The study concluded that whole grain consumption was inversely related to premature CAD, while refined grain consumption was directly related to the risk of premature CAD. Studies like these further strengthen and validate the existing evidence-based heart-healthy diet recommendations. ♥

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Almonds

Another great source of vitamin E, almonds contain a lot of healthy fats, protein, and fiber, and minerals such as magnesium and calcium. Almond consumption has been linked to numerous health benefits, including boosting heart health.



Sunflower Seeds

Sunflower seeds are particularly high in vitamin E, a fat-soluble vitamin that helps maintain healthy eyes and skin, strengthens the immune system, and helps with reproduction. Consumption of sunflower seeds has also been linked to decreased inflammation, decreased risk of high blood pressure, and increased heart health.



Green Leafy Vegetables

Kale, spinach, broccoli, and Swiss chard are examples of green leafy vegetables that are bursting with nutrition from vitamins K, A, and E; folate, beta carotene, and vitamin C; and many B vitamins as well. In particular, vitamin K helps with various proteins needed for blood clotting and is also helpful for the building of bones.



Avocado

Notably rich in vitamin K, avocados are also a great source of fiber, healthy fats, vitamin C, B6, potassium, magnesium, and folate. Studies have shown that avocados are helpful for gut health and heart health. Lately, avocado oil has also been highlighted as a healthy oil for cooking; due to its high smoke point, it is an ideal oil for frying or other high-heat cooking methods.