



## A Natural Spring in Your Step

The inside scoop on foods that energize your body to give you a little more bounce.

What puts a spring in your step? Of course, intangible things do—like receiving good news, enjoying a beautiful day, or falling in love. But, what about food? That choice rarely comes to mind, but there are a number of foods that have the potential to give you more energy and lift your spirits.

### Fruits and vegetables

Would it surprise you to know that fruits and vegetables top the list of energy-providing foods? These nutrient-packed treasures do it all. Not only do they give you a great assortment of vitamins and minerals, they're also rich in phytochemicals (like flavanoids, for example) that provide additional nutrition and antioxidant protection.

**Vegetables like bell peppers, spinach, kale, arugula, and chard are flavorful, low calorie, and nutritionally dense—packed with vitamins, minerals, and fiber.**

Ideally, you're getting a good mix of different types—and colors—of fruits and vegetables and benefitting from the spirit-lifting vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals.

### Drink up

When you forget to water plants, they shrivel up and look lifeless. Your body is not much different. Like all living things, humans need water to survive. Since there's water in every cell, tissue, and organ of your body, staying hydrated throughout the day can keep you more energized and vital. Dehydration, on the other hand, can be taxing on the body and make you feel run down. So, start each day with a tall glass of water—it's a great no-calorie refresher.

### Lighten your steps

Of course, eating light can also put a spring in your step—the smaller your portions, the lighter you feel. Also, digesting a heavy meal requires energy, which has to be diverted from other bodily processes. This can make you feel like you're being zapped of energy.

Mindful eating can help you eat less. So, slow down and take time to enjoy the experience every time you sit down for a meal.

### A little, not a lot

Recent studies have found that smaller, yet more frequent, servings of caffeine—about the amount in a cup of green tea—throughout the day

appear to be better than large amounts for staying alert. So, consider a nice cup of tea for getting that occasional lift.



# Healthy Results You Can "C"

Vitamin C is a nutritional powerhouse. It promotes a healthy immune system, is involved in tissue repair and healing, and is an important antioxidant that helps protect the body from damaging free radicals.

Free radicals are naturally produced during the metabolism process (breaking down food into energy) and when the body is exposed to toxins like tobacco smoke, air pollution, or radiation. Vitamin C, however, is an important antioxidant that blocks free radicals from attacking healthy tissue. Additionally, the vitamin has been shown to regenerate the body, prevent fatigue, and help you recover from injury and disease.

**When we think of natural sources of vitamin C, the first thing that comes to mind is often citrus, especially oranges and grapefruit.**

Orange juice is a convenient way to get a nice, big dose of vitamin C in the morning—186 mg (milligrams) per 12-ounce glass, to be exact. According to the USDA, other good sources of vitamin C include:

- One cup red bell pepper (raw): 190 mg
- Two medium kiwifruits: 141 mg
- One cup cooked broccoli: 101 mg
- One cup strawberries: 97 mg
- One cup cooked Brussels sprouts: 96 mg
- One cup papaya (raw): 85 mg
- One medium orange: 69.7 mg

The daily amount of vitamin C recommended depends on your age, sex, and other factors. Here are a few examples:

- Adult men: 90 mg
- Adult women: 75 mg

Some people may need extra vitamin C in their diets:

- **Smokers:** Add 35 mg to the above values to calculate your total daily recommended amount
- **Pregnant women:** Add 10 mg to the above values for adult women
- **Breastfeeding women:** Add 45 mg to the above values for adult women



- **People recovering from surgery** (varies by individual case, ask your health care provider)
- **People exposed** to pollution, radiation, and secondhand smoke (varies by case)
- **Burn victims** (varies by severity of case)

If you're getting vitamin C from natural sources, you'll also be taking in plenty of other amazing nutrients because some of the best sources of vitamin C are fruits and vegetables—which are full of vitamins, minerals, and fiber.

So, make sure you slow down long enough to add some vitamin C to your busy day. You'll surely notice the boost it provides.

# Tips for Letting Go of a Habit

Take a gentle approach to nixing bad habits. This process will require willpower, but it may result in longer-term success than aggressive attempts at quick fixes.

## Letting Go

We often talk about “breaking” a habit, but “letting go” is probably a better way to look at it. You’re releasing the habit so that it’s no longer a part of your life, rather than using all your energy and willpower to “break” it.

## Willingness to Change

The first step to letting go of a habit is being willing to change. In fact, that can be your first affirmation in your journey to change. You can remind yourself repeatedly: “I’m willing to change now.”

## Recognizing Your Reaction

Sometimes a habit becomes reflexive. For example, your habit of “After dinner, I want ice cream” may become so ingrained that—without your being aware of it—it can override other things that you truly want, like a healthier heart or thinner waistline.

## Making Space

When the habit comes up, give yourself space. Do not react to it immediately. Instead, breathe deeply to calm yourself. Become aware of your feelings and consider how you will feel about responding differently than usual. You can also ask yourself: “Does this habit add to my life or detract from it?” This can give you the clarity to see that you are finished with the habit and ready to let it go.

## Savor the Moment

On the other hand, there are times when indulging yourself in a habit that’s relatively harmless may also bring clarity that helps you let it go.

Sometimes we find ourselves doing things reflexively—“out of habit”—and we don’t realize that we are repeating the behavior in search of satisfaction. In such cases, since we’re not completely conscious of what we’re doing, the satisfaction is not fully appreciated. Before you know it, we’re doing it again. For example, you may find yourself heading for the freezer with

an empty bowl and not even remember that you already ate ice cream.

But, if you’re becoming more aware—taking the time to truly savor the moment when you indulge yourself—you may find a deeper, more lasting satisfaction, and no longer need to repeat the behavior habitually.



# Smart Swapping

Adopting a healthier diet doesn't have to be as daunting as you think. Simply making small, consistent substitutions in what you eat and drink can yield noticeable improvements in your health. Incorporate healthy nutrition into your meals—while still eating what you love—with the following healthy alternatives.

## Eat more, weigh less

It's a common misconception that you have to starve yourself to maintain a healthy diet and lose weight. But, you can still cut calories without feeling hungry. For example, foods with lots of fiber (like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains) or that have ample water (such as fruits, vegetables, clear soups and broths) are more filling and are usually lower in calories.

## Fast food at home

Not having enough time to cook can sabotage your healthy eating goals, so keep

meals simple when you're in a rush. Try having blueberries and peanut butter on whole-wheat toast for breakfast; a lettuce, chicken, and red bell pepper wrap for lunch; and green beans and carrots with a fillet of cod for dinner. Those meals take about five to ten minutes to prepare and will be overall much tastier and better for you than most fast food options.

## Avocado appreciation

Replace the mayo on your sandwich or wrap with slices of ripe avocado. Avocados are loaded with vitamins and minerals, and while they're high in fat, it's the good kind

of monounsaturated fat that can reduce levels of "bad" cholesterol. Use the nutrient-dense fruit to bolster salads, thicken smoothies, or replace butter or oil in baked goods. And don't forget to mash them up with diced tomatoes, onion and lime juice to create a delectable guacamole dip. Use avocados sparingly, though—one cup provides about a third of your total daily fat intake.

## Make fruit your dessert

Desserts can offset an otherwise healthy meal plan. Try satisfying your sweet-tooth after meals with an

assortment of fresh berries and sliced fruit instead of high-fat, high-calorie ice cream. Even sorbets or low-fat frozen yogurt can be better alternatives.

## Remember not to kick yourself over a slip up now and then.

Just be mindful of what you eat next time and take pride in any healthy modification you make to your meals, snacks, and drinks. Small changes are always better than making no changes at all.

