Hippocrates was to thank for the famous quote, “Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food” — which we translated to “food is medicine” and use as our motto. Still to this day medical doctors and historians consider Hippocrates to be the founder of medicine as a “rational science.” (http://www.greekmedicine.net/whos_who/Hippocrates.html) Considered to be one of the most influential figures in the history of medicine and healing, Hippocrates was ahead of his time when, around the year 400 B.C, he advised people to prevent and treat diseases first and foremost by eating a nutrient-dense diet. Why is a calorie not just a calorie when it comes to your health, and how come it matters so much which types of foods you get your calories from? Foods provide us with energy (calories), but they do much more than that. The foods you include in your diet also play a critical role in controlling inflammation levels, balancing blood sugar, regulating cardiovascular health (including blood pressure and cholesterol levels), helping the digestive organs to process and eliminate waste, and much, much more. Did you know that certain anti-inflammatory foods (https://draxe.com/anti-inflammatory-foods/) even contain powerful active ingredients that help control how your genes are expressed? Hippocrates and the Ancient Greeks weren’t the only ones onto something when they studied the many medicinal properties of foods. Many traditional systems of healing which have been practiced throughout history — including Ayurvedic Medicine (https://draxe.com/ayurvedic-medicine/) and Traditional Chinese Medicine, for example — have taught
for thousands of years that food is medicine and a healthy diet is a powerful tool for protecting one’s health. Below you’ll learn which medicinal foods we now know make the biggest impact in someone’s health overall, which foods you should avoid most, and how to get started today eating a healing diet (https://draxe.com/healing-diet/).

How Food Works Like Medicine

Perhaps more than anything else in our lives, the foods we regularly eat help determine whether or not we will become ill, or remain healthy into older age. Whether vegetables, fruit, meat, oils or grains, foods contain influential substances including antioxidants, phytonutrients (https://draxe.com/phytonutrients/), vitamins, minerals, fatty acids, fiber and much more.

Nutrient deficiencies and toxicity from a poor diet are linked to nearly all modern health conditions. John Hopkins University reports that some 80 percent of cancer patients are believed to be malnourished, and that treatments used to battle cancer (like chemotherapy) only increase the body’s need for nutrients and very high-quality foods even more. (1 (http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/hmn/w10/feature2.cfm)) You probably already know that diabetes and heart disease (https://draxe.com/coronary-heart-disease/) (currently the No. 1 killer in the U.S. and most industrialized nations) are also illnesses that are highly influenced by one’s diet — and the same can be said for allergies, autoimmune disorders like arthritis, thyroid disorders and many more.

The expanding field of Nutrigenomics (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nutrigenomics) (also called Nutritional Genomics) is devoted to studying how food influences gene expressions and contributes to either health and longevity or to disease and earlier death. The principles behind nutrigenomics can be summarized in several key points: genes play a role in disease development and prevention; a poor diet can be a serious risk factor for many diseases; nutrient deficiencies and toxic chemicals in low-quality foods have an effect on human gene expressions; each person is different in terms of how much their genes/health are impacted by their diet; and a healthy but also personalized diet (https://draxe.com/personalized-diet/) can be used to prevent, mitigate or cure chronic diseases. (2 (http://nutrigenomics.ucdavis.edu/?page=information))

Some of the ways that medicinal foods specifically act like natural protectors against disease and help to slow the effects of aging, include:

- **Decreasing & Controlling Inflammation** – Inflammation is the root of most diseases (https://draxe.com/inflammation-at-the-root-of-most-diseases/) and a major contributor to the effects of aging. Inflammation is a response from the immune system when the body perceives it’s being threatened, and it can affect nearly every tissue, hormone and cell in the body. Research also shows that “obesity has a strong inflammatory component,” a problem that now affects nearly two-thirds of all adults in the U.S. (3 (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2952901/))

- **Balancing Hormones** (https://draxe.com/10-ways-balance-hormones-naturally/) - Hormones affect every part of health, from your energy and cognitive abilities to your body weight and sex drive. Abnormal hormonal changes contribute to accelerated aging, diabetes, obesity, fatigue, depression, low mental capacity, reproductive problems and an array of autoimmune diseases. (4 (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1970554/))

- **Alkalizing the Body** – The human body keeps a tight grip on its internal pH level, working hard to keep it around a pH of 7.36. Studies show that when it comes to the pH and net acid load in the human diet,
“there has been considerable change from the hunter–gather civilization to the present.” (5
(https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3195546/)) Processed, low-quality foods make the body
more acidic and allow diseases to thrive more easily. An alkaline diet (https://draxe.com/leptin-and-
alkaline-foods/) (high in plant foods that are detoxifying) helps with cellular renewal and might promote
longevity.

- **Balancing Blood Glucose (Sugar)** – Diabetes and weight gain are tied to poor insulin response and
other hormonal changes. Poorly managed blood sugar levels due to consuming high amounts of sugar
and processed carbohydrates can lead to cravings, fatigue, neurological damage, mood disorders,
hormonal balances and more. To sustain normal blood sugar (https://draxe.com/normal-blood-
sugar/), experts recommend that low-glycemic and non-processed carbohydrates take the place of
refined, empty calories and added sugar. (6 (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3977406/))

- **Detoxifying (https://draxe.com/detox-drinks/) & Eliminating Toxins** – Toxicity is tied to poor digestive
health, hormonal changes and decreasing liver functioning. In modern society, we are bombarded by
chemicals from our diet and environment that contribute to inflammation, autoimmune diseases,
infertility, hypothyroidism, fibromyalgia, and so on.

- **Improving Absorption of Nutrients** – Many of today’s illnesses are due to nutritional deficiencies and
high rates of free radical damage. The majority of processed convenience foods are stripped of their
natural nutrients or at least partly manmade, packed with synthetic ingredients and preservatives but
very low in vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, fiber and enzymes.
GUIDE TO FOOD IS MEDICINE

“Let medicine be thy food and let food be thy medicine.” — Hippocrates, 400 B.C.

He advised people to prevent and treat diseases first and foremost by eating a nutrient-dense diet.

Ayurveda and Traditional Chinese Medicine have also taught for thousands of years that food is medicine and a healthy diet is a powerful tool for protecting one’s health.

FACTS ABOUT FOOD BEING MEDICINE

- Perhaps more than anything else in our lives, the foods we regularly eat help determine whether or not we will become ill, or remain healthy into older age.
- Nutrient deficiencies and toxicity from a poor diet are linked to nearly all modern health conditions. E.g., John Hopkins University reports that some 80 percent of cancer patients are believed to be malnourished.
- The expanding field of Nutrigenomics (also called Nutritional Genomics) is devoted to studying how food influences gene expressions and contributes to either health and longevity, or to disease and earlier death.
How Food Works Like Medicine

- decreases and controls inflammation
- balances hormones
- alkalizes the body
- balances blood sugar
- detoxifies and eliminates toxins
- improves absorption of toxins

Best Examples of Medicinal Foods

- Fresh/raw vegetables
- Organ meats and bone broth
- Probiotic foods
- Omega-3 foods and healthy fats
- High-antioxidant foods
- High-fiber foods
7 of the Best Medicinal Foods

As we get older and our appetite starts to decline, we tend to consume less calories overall and, therefore, our food choices matter more than ever. Research shows that as caloric intake and absorption of nutrients drops among the elderly, rates of diseases including cancer and heart disease steadily increase.

To help prevent deficiencies and lower your risk for illness, it’s crucial to make every calorie count. Here are six food groups that help protect you most:

1. Fresh/Raw Vegetables

Green vegetables (like kale, wheat grass and spinach, for example), sea vegetables and fresh vegetable juices are considered some of the healthiest foods on earth, known to dramatically help slow aging (https://draxe.com/how-to-naturally-slow-aging/). They help restore the body’s proper pH, prevent nutrient deficiencies, curb hunger and detoxify the blood. They are also super low in calories, yet beaming with antioxidants, phytonutrients and vitamin C, vitamin K, magnesium, potassium, iodine and fiber.

Antioxidants found in vegetables are an amazing thing: They develop within plants to protect the plant from its damaging environment including ultraviolet radiation, predator pests, toxins and pollution. Phytonutrients have the purpose of shielding plants from predators (and also provide their color, flavor and smell), and we obtain the same benefits when we eat them.

Nearly all diseases including infections, osteoporosis and even cancer thrive in an acidic environment, but by alkalizing your body naturally through eating more plant foods (especially fresh veggies), you help prevent cellular damage. Veggies of all kinds help lower free radical damage (https://draxe.com/fighting-free-radical-damage/) and control inflammation, plus many provide prebiotics and a high dose of fiber.

2. Organ Meats & Bone Broth

Organ meats, including beef or chicken liver (https://draxe.com/chicken-liver-pate/), are some of the most nutrient-concentrated foods available to us. Liver is a true superfood and exceptionally high in zinc, iron, vitamin A, vitamin B12 and more. It might not seem appealing to you at first, but consider that a “nose to tail” approach of eating animals has been practiced for thousands of years — and for good reason!

Consuming nutrient-packed organ meats (http://www.mensfitness.com/nutrition/what-to-eat/7-nutrient-packed-animal-organs) and all edible parts of an animal, plus making bone broth (https://draxe.com/the-healing-power-of-bone-broth-for-digestion-arthritis-and-cellulite/) with the remaining parts that are normally discarded (like bones, skin and ligaments), provides us with hard-to-find nutrients like collagen (https://draxe.com/what-is-collagen/), glucosamine and an abundance of electrolytes and trace minerals. These nutrients help ward off and treat illnesses like irritable bowel disorders (IBD), arthritis and joint pains, chronic fatigue, leaky gut syndrome, anemia and allergies.

3. Probiotic Foods

Probiotics are not only critical for optimal digestion, but also for overall immune function and health. The digestive system (https://draxe.com/how-your-digestive-system-works/) is the second largest part of our neurological system and holds 80 percent of your entire immune system! A huge array of illnesses actually stem from poor gut health, including thyroid imbalances, chronic fatigue, joint pain, psoriasis, autism and food allergies.
The microbes that make up our gut flora are involved in weight control, appetite, inflammatory processes, cognitive functioning and neurotransmitter production. (7 (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC207122/)) This means that everything from your mood and energy levels to your ability to prevent common colds is tied to your gut.

Beneficial bacteria and other microbes living in the digestive tract thrive when we regularly replenish them by consuming both probiotic-rich foods (https://draxe.com/probiotics-benefits-foods-supplements/) (like yogurt, kombucha, kefir and cultured veggies) and also those with prebiotics (https://draxe.com/prebiotics/) (like chicory, asparagus and artichokes).

4. Omega-3 Foods

A diet high in “good fats” is essential for controlling inflammation, cognitive health, hormone production, cancer prevention, weight loss and cellular healing. Omega-3 fats are natural anti-inflammatories and help counteract the effects of pro-inflammatory omega-6 fats, which are very high in modern-day diets. (8 (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12480795))

The best sources of omega-3s (https://draxe.com/omega-3-foods/) include wild-caught fish like salmon, sardines, halibut, tuna and mackerel. Other plant sources include walnuts, flaxseeds and chia seeds. Try to avoid hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated oils, trans fats, soybean oil, canola oil and other vegetable oils which are very high in omega-6s.

5. Healthy Fats

Not all fats are created equal (see directly above), but the certain good ones pack a lot of medicinal punch. From lowering bad cholesterol and helping shed excess weight to giving you shiny hair and healthy nails, your body will reap the benefits of healthy fats like avocado, grass-fed butter, ghee, coconut oil, MCT oil, extra virgin olive oil and yes, omega-3 fats (such as found in wild-caught salmon.)

It’s been been proved there is no evidence that dietary saturated fat increases a person’s risk for coronary heart disease or cardiovascular disease. (9 (http://ajcn.nutrition.org/content/early/2010/01/13/ajcn.2009.27725.abstract))

Additionally, a seven-year study of more than 48,000 women showed that low-fat diets don’t lead to more weight loss or less disease. (10 (http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16391215)) And yet another study found that, when subjects ate either a Mediterranean diet (https://draxe.com/mediterranean-diet/) (which is loaded with healthy fats), low-fat diet or low-carb diet, those following a high-fat, low-carb meal plan not only lost the most weight, but also drastically reduced their bad cholesterol levels. (11 (http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa0708681))

6. High-Antioxidant Foods

Antioxidants slow the effects of aging by decreasing free radical damage. A good indication that a food has a high amount of antioxidants? If it’s naturally brightly colored (red, orange, yellow, green, etc.) chances are it’s supplying nutrients like beta carotene, resveratrol, flavonoids and more. Some of the best foods for obtaining antioxidants (https://draxe.com/top-10-high-antioxidant-foods/) include: berries, red wine, raw cocoa, acai, spirulina, leafy greens, fresh herbs and spices, cruciferous veggies and bright root veggies.

7. High Fiber Foods
Here’s a scary finding: it’s estimated that less than 5 percent of Americans get the recommended amount of dietary fiber they need each day! You might already know that dietary fiber helps keep you “regular” in the bathroom, but did you know it’s also very important for heart health, your entire digestive system and gut, and even your immune system?

Fiber helps to reduce cholesterol and triglycerides, strengthens the colon walls, plays a role in regulating blood sugar levels, helps prevent insulin resistance, and promotes the growth of beneficial probiotic bacteria in your gut that influence immunity.

It’s recommended that adults get at least 25–30 grams of fiber daily. (12 [https://www.ucsfhealth.org/education/increasing_fiber_intake/]) High-fiber diets are associated with better protection against obesity, cancer, cardiovascular diseases, digestive disorders and menstrual problems (just to name a few). High-fiber foods ([https://draxe.com/high-fiber-foods/]) include leafy greens, cruciferous veggies, avocado, coconut, starchy veggies, berries, nuts, seeds, sprouted legumes and ancient grains.

The “Food Is Medicine Diet”: What It Looks Like In Action

Eating a healing diet ([https://draxe.com/healing-diet/]), filled with medicinal foods that help prevent and treat diseases naturally, is easier than you might think. My Healing Foods Diet consists of eating roughly equal amounts (33 percent each) of clean protein sources, healthy fats, and low glycemic carbohydrates in the forms of fruits and vegetables. Each person’s needs are a bit different, but balance and eating a variety of real foods is key.

Here’s what a “medicinal diet” looks like when using nutritional foods to your benefit:

- **Organic Vegetables** (all kinds, raw and cooked): especially those that are high in fiber and low-glycemic including leafy greens, mushrooms, asparagus, artichokes, squash, sea vegetables, fresh herbs and so on
- **Fresh Fruits**: especially berries, citrus and melon, which are great sources of antioxidants
- **Grass-Fed/Pasture-Raised Meats**: grass-fed and free-range meats ([https://draxe.com/cancer-fighting-cla-higher-in-grass-fed-beef/]) offer not just protein, but also many fatty acids missing in the Standard American Diet (SAD) such as arachidonic acid, conjugated linoleic acid, and omega 3 fatty acids. Turkey, beef, cage-free eggs, lamb, venison, fish and organ meats, and also raw dairy products are all good choices
- **Low-Glycemic Carbohydrates**: in addition to fruits and veggies, this includes sprouted ancient grains (gluten-free is best), soaked legumes and beans, nuts and seeds
- **Healthy Fats**: good sources include wild seafood, coconut oil/cream, real olive oil, avocado, nuts and seeds
- **Other Superfoods** ([https://draxe.com/top-10-superfoods-what%E2%80%99s-in-your-diet%E2%80%A8/]) & Condiments: these include other ingredients that highly nutritious, low in calories, and capable of adding major flavor to food naturally. Sources include apple cider vinegar, garlic, raw honey, spices like turmeric and cinnamon, cocoa, sea salt, and stevia
- **Healthy Drinks**: the beverages you consume should be free from added sugar, hydrating, high in antioxidants and low in sugar. Good choices include plain water or seltzer, herbal teas, fresh veggies juices, bone broth, and coffee and red wine in moderation
Precautions When Following a “Food Is Medicine” Lifestyle

While a nutritional foods certainly help to promote overall health, it’s still best to seek medical care from a professional and not to discontinue any medications without being monitored or told to do so. As you’ve seen, the majority of diseases can at least be partially prevented through a healthy diet and lifestyle, but there are some instances when a diet filled with medicinal foods might not be enough.

Each individual is different in terms of how their genes react to certain foods, so for some people even if they eat a perfect diet they might still develop an illness. Genetics certainly play a role in the development of diseases like cancer, heart disease, autoimmune disorders, and more. Regardless of whether or not someone’s disease or illness could have been prevented through a healthier lifestyle, eating a nutrient-dense diet is still one of the best ways to help manage symptoms and increase odds of recovery.

Final Thoughts On Food Being Medicine

- Because foods have an effect on inflammation levels, blood sugar, energy, hormones, brain and heart health, they truly do act like medicine once consumed
- A healthy diet plays a role in how genes are expressed and can tip the scale in favor of preventing disease, even if one runs in your family
- Some of the most medicinal foods there are include vegetables and fruits, organ meats, grass-fed meats, healthy fats like coconut and seeds, sea vegetables and superfoods like cocoa and red wine


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25 Greatist Superfoods and Why They're Super

Here’s a great excuse to gorge on pumpkin pie, blueberry cobbler, apple streusel, and chocolate-covered strawberries! Well, kind of. Yep, they’re all Greatist superfoods—just hold the sugar to get the most benefits. Here are the reasons these fruits, veggies, grains, and dairy products have made our list of the world’s best superfoods.

1. Greek Yogurt Regular yogurt’s thicker, creamier cousin is chock-full of protein and probiotics. It fills the belly, improves digestion, and bolsters the immune system. Plus, it’s a great healthy recipe substitute for sour cream, cream cheese, and even mayonnaise!

2. Quinoa This teeny-tiny, grain-like seed packs some serious nutritional prowess. With a mild, nutty flavor and a texture similar to rice or couscous, quinoa is one of the only grains or seeds that provides all nine essential amino acids our bodies can’t produce themselves. And it’s filled with protein—eight grams per one-cup serving, to be exact!
3. **Blueberries** Don’t worry; these berries won’t cause an oompa-loompa-like reaction. In fact, they’re nutritional superstars, filled with fiber, vitamin C, and cancer-fighting compounds. And studies suggest blueberries may even improve memory.

4. **Kale** This rough and tough green beats out all the rest in terms of nutrition, providing more antioxidants than most other fruits and veggies! It’s also a fantastic source of fiber, calcium, and iron. Prepare it virtually any way, from boiled or steamed to roasted (try it as a chip!) or stewed.

5. **Chia** Ch-ch-ch-chia! Yep, this little seed is the same as those adorable little ceramic animal planters of the 90s! But don’t worry, the nutritious part is not the clay pot. Chia seeds are actually loaded with the most essential fatty acids of **any known plant**! Plus, one serving of the stuff is loaded with magnesium, iron, calcium, and potassium.

6. **Oatmeal** High in fiber, antioxidants, and tons of other nutrients, this breakfast staple has been shown to help lower cholesterol levels, aid in digestion, and even improve metabolism. And it’s downright delicious—especially when flavored like **pumpkin pie**!

7. **Green Tea** This ages-old health secret has been used as a natural remedy for everything from cancer to heart disease! The secret to this delicious drink? Antioxidants! The main superhero here is **Epigallocatechin gallate**, or EGCG, a phytochemical that slows irregular cell growth, which could potentially help prevent the growth of some cancers.

8. **Broccoli** This lean, mean, green machine is packed with vitamins, minerals, disease-fighting compounds, and the fiber essential in any diet. Though all members of the cruciferous vegetable family are super-duper healthy, broccoli stands out for its exceptionally high levels of vitamin C and folate (which can reduce risk of heart disease, certain cancers, and stroke).

9. **Strawberries** Vitamin C is the superstar of this superfood. Just one cup of these red beauties satisfies the daily requirement for vitamin C (74 milligrams per day for women, 90 for men)! Studies suggest the antioxidant helps build and repair the body’s tissues, boosts immunity, and fights excess free radical damage. And the vitamin C in strawberries could help promote healthy eye function.

10. **Salmon** This heart-healthy fish is packed with protein and a healthy dose of omega-3 fatty acids, which studies suggest may help reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. And bonus points: Salmon may also protect skin from the sun and the damaging effects of UV rays.

11. **Watermelon** Low in sugar and high in vitamins A and C, this summer treat is the prefect fresh, low-calorie snack. Studies suggest watermelon could also potentially lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. And the lycopene in watermelon could help protect the body from UV rays and cancer.

12. **Spinach** Antioxidants, anti-inflammatories, and vitamins that promote vision and bone health are what make this little ol' green so super. And those bones will be thanking spinach, too! Just one cup of the stuff packs up to 12 percent of the
recommended daily dose of calcium and enough vitamin K to help prevent bone loss.

13. **Pistachios** These lil’ nuts are hiding lots of [protein and fiber](https://greatist.com/health/25-greatist-superfoods-and-why-theyre-super) behind their earthy flavor and nutty crunch. Plus, they’re naturally cholesterol-free. A one-ounce serving of these nuts has almost as much potassium as one [small banana](https://greatist.com/health/25-greatist-superfoods-and-why-theyre-super).

14. **Eggs** A relatively inexpensive protein source loaded with nutrients, eggs certainly earn their superfood status. A single large egg is just about 70 calories and offers six grams of protein. Eggs are also a great source of omega-3 fatty acids, which are essential for normal body function and heart health.

15. **Almonds** Surprise! Almonds are *the* most nutritionally dense nut, meaning they offer the highest concentration of nutrients per calorie per ounce. For just [91 calories](https://greatist.com/health/25-greatist-superfoods-and-why-theyre-super), a one-ounce serving provides 3.4 grams of fiber (that’s about 14 percent of the daily recommended value) and a healthy dose of potassium, calcium, vitamin E, magnesium, and iron. Plus, you can eat them as [BUTTER!](https://greatist.com/health/25-greatist-superfoods-and-why-theyre-super).

16. **Ginger** Slightly spicy but oh-so-enjoyable, ginger has been used for years as a delicious flavoring and an all-natural remedy for everything from an upset stomach to unwanted inflammation.

17. **Beets** This all-star veggie contains tons of [vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants](https://greatist.com/health/25-greatist-superfoods-and-why-theyre-super) that can help fight disease and strengthen vital organs. And their purple hue may be the secret to their healthy success—some studies suggest [betalains](https://greatist.com/health/25-greatist-superfoods-and-why-theyre-super), the purple pigments in these veggies, may help ward off cancer and other degenerative diseases.

18. **Beans** High in protein and low in cholesterol, beans of any variety can add a healthy twist to any dish (even [brownies!](https://greatist.com/health/25-greatist-superfoods-and-why-theyre-super)). They’re also loaded with fiber, folate, and magnesium, and studies have shown that legumes (like beans) can actually help lower cholesterol and reduce the risk of certain cancers (at least in rats...).

19. **Pumpkin** Loaded with antioxidants and vitamins, these gourds aren’t just for carving (or making into pie). The star nutrient here is [beta-carotene](https://greatist.com/health/25-greatist-superfoods-and-why-theyre-super), a [provitamin](https://greatist.com/health/25-greatist-superfoods-and-why-theyre-super) that the body converts to vitamin A, which is known for its immune boosting powers and essential role in [eye health](https://greatist.com/health/25-greatist-superfoods-and-why-theyre-super).

20. **Apples** Say it with us, people: “Fiber is good.” And apples are a great low-calorie source. (A medium-sized apple weighs in at under 100 calories.) Plus, upping apple intake has been associated with reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, certain cancers, diabetes, and asthma.

21. **Cranberries** It’s time to work these fall favorites into dishes year-round. Whether it’s in the shape of a can or fresh off the stove, cranberries have a handful of health benefits and disease-fighting powers. These bacteria-busting berries can help fight inflammation, reduce the risk of heart disease, improve oral health, help prevent ulcers and yeast infections, and may even inhibit the growth of some human cancer cells.

22. **Garlic** Yes, it might leave breath less-than-desirable, but these cloves can do more than flavor—they’ve been used for centuries as food and medicine. These days, [garlic is used to treat](https://greatist.com/health/25-greatist-superfoods-and-why-theyre-super) anything from high blood pressure and heart disease to certain types of cancer. Plus, studies suggest garlic [extract](https://greatist.com/health/25-greatist-superfoods-and-why-theyre-super) can be used to treat yeast infections in women and prostate issues in men.

23. **Cauliflower** While all the vitamins and minerals are a great bonus, the real star here is cauliflower’s cancer-fighting compounds, [glucosinolates](https://greatist.com/health/25-greatist-superfoods-and-why-theyre-super). These phytochemicals are responsible for cauliflower’s sometimes-bitter flavor, but they have also been shown to prevent damage to the lungs and stomach by carcinogens, potentially protecting against those cancers.

And thanks to interactions with estrogen, cauliflower may also help prevent [hormone-driven cancers](https://greatist.com/health/25-greatist-superfoods-and-why-theyre-super) like breast, uterine, and cervical. 24. **Leeks** Leeks owe many of their anti-cancer superpowers to their [organosulphur compounds](https://greatist.com/health/25-greatist-superfoods-and-why-theyre-super). These nutrients have been credited with everything from kicking cancer to boosting immunity. Studies also suggest leeks could help protect the digestive system from stomach and gastric cancers.
25. Lentils They're pretty cheap, easy to prepare, and high in protein, iron and other essential nutrients. Need we say more? The iron may help fight off anemia (a condition that’s especially common among vegetarians and vegans), and they’re low on the glycemic index, too. That means they cause blood sugar to spike less quickly than other starches, so our energy lasts longer.
Pharmacokinetics and tissue distribution of 14C-labeled grape polyphenols in the periphery and the central nervous system following oral administration.

Janle EM¹, Lila MA, Grannan M, Wood L, Higgins A, Yousef GG, Rogers RB, Kim H, Jackson GS, Ho L, Weaver CM.

Author information

Abstract
Grape polyphenols confer potential health benefits, including prevention of neurodegenerative diseases. To determine the absorption and tissue distribution of the complex grape polyphenol mixture, (14)C-labeled polyphenols were biosynthesized by grape cell suspension cultures, during co-incubation with radioisotopically labeled sucrose, and fractionated into polyphenolic subfractions. The pharmacokinetics and distribution of grape polyphenols into blood, brain, and peripheral interstitial fluid were determined by tracking the (14)C label. The blood peak (14)C concentration of the fractions ranged from 15 minutes to 4 hours. Absorption and tissue distribution varied greatly between fractions. Concentrations in interstitial fluid were lower than in blood. The amount of residual label in the brain at 24 hours ranged from 0.1% to 1.7% of the dose, depending on the fraction. (14)C label found in the brain tissue and brain microdialysate indicated that grape polyphenols or their metabolites are able to cross the blood-brain barrier. Using (14)C-labeled plant polyphenols it is possible to track the compounds or their metabolic products into any tissue and determine distribution patterns in spite of low concentrations. A central question regarding the potential role of dietary polyphenolics in neurodegenerative research is whether they are bioavailable in the brain. Our observations indicate that some grape-derived polyphenolics do reach the brain, which suggests their potential value for applications in neurodegenerative disorders.

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Quinoa seeds leach phytoecdysteroids and other compounds with anti-diabetic properties.


Author information

Abstract
Quinoa (Chenopodium quinoa Willd.) contains high levels of biologically active phytoecdysteroids, which have been implicated in plant defense from insects, and have shown a range of beneficial pharmacological effects in mammals. We demonstrated that the most prevalent phytoecdysteroid, 20-hydroxyecdysone (20HE), was secreted (leached) from intact quinoa seeds into water during the initial stages of seed germination. Leaching efficiency was optimized by ethanol concentration (70\% ethanol), temperature (80°C), time (4h), and solvent ratio (5 ml/g seed). When compared to extraction of macerated seeds, the leaching procedure released essentially all the 20HE available in the seeds (491 μg/g seed). The optimized quinoa leachate (QL), containing 0.86% 20HE, 1.00% total phytoecdysteroids, 2.59% flavonoid glycosides, 11.9% oil, and 20.4% protein, significantly lowered fasting blood glucose in obese, hyperglycemic mice. Leaching effectively releases and concentrates bioactive phytochemicals from quinoa seeds, providing an efficient means to produce a food-grade mixture that may be useful for anti-diabetic applications.

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KEYWORDS: Ecdysteron; Flavonoids; Metabolic syndrome; Nutraceutical; Phytoecdysteroids

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