



POWER RANGES

MEET YOUR PANTRY'S SUPERHEROES

Want stronger bones, better skin and a lightning-fast metabolism? Superfoods may be more than a buzzword - they could be your saviour. By Sarah Jio

inflammation fighters

From heart disease to joint aches, beat swelling with these choices



salmon Experts have long known that inflammation in the body is linked to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease. Keep your heart healthy by eating plenty of fish like salmon, which are high in omega-3 fatty acids, a powerful anti-inflammatory. **How much should you be eating?** Aim for two to three 85g servings of omega-3-rich fish like salmon, sardines or rainbow trout each week.



dark chocolate

According to experts, the anti-oxidants in dark chocolate, called flavonoids, may help reduce cellular damage and ward off certain chronic diseases. Even better: dark chocolate has been proven to lower blood pressure and reduce your risk of heart disease. **How much should you be eating?** Keep it to a 30g serving a day, and look for an overall cocoa percentage of 65 per cent or higher, suggests dietitian Erin Palinski.



cherries Do your joints ache after a hard work-out? According to recent research, the darker the fruit, like black cherries, the more potent their pain- and inflammation-blasting powers. One study¹ found that people who drank cherry juice before a long-distance run reported fewer post-work-out muscle aches than those who drank a placebo. "Cherries contain an anti-oxidant called anthocyanin, which has been shown to decrease inflammation," says dietitian and author Keri Gans. **How much should you be eating?** Eat a one-cup serving (about 12 large cherries) several times per week. And frozen berries deliver the same nutritional benefits as fresh ones, adds Gans. ▶

PHOTOGRAPHED BY GETTY IMAGES. "JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF SPORTS NUTRITION VOL. 7, NO. 17 (2010)

skin soothers

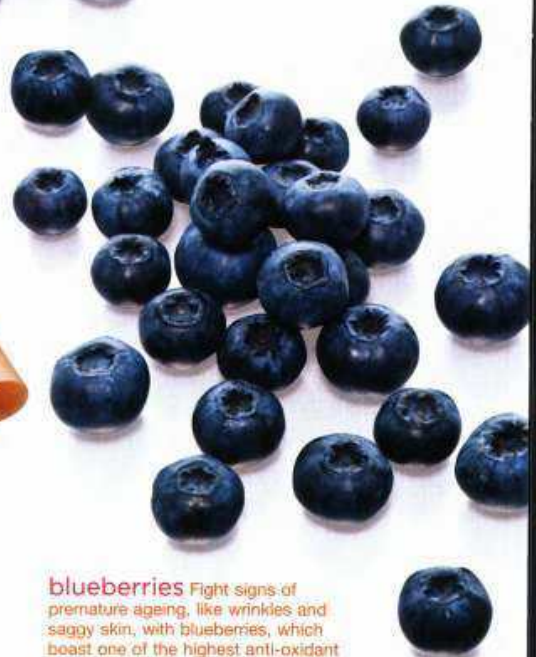
Get glowing, clear, sun-protected skin from nature's best beauty foods.



walnuts Packed with essential fatty acids and vitamin E, walnuts keep skin looking radiant and vibrant. "Vitamin E is vital in protecting skin cells from ultraviolet radiation, pollution and other elements that produce cell-damaging free radicals," explains Palinski.
How much should you be eating?
 Enjoy a 30g serving of walnuts (about 14 shelled walnut halves) as a snack several times per week.



turkey You already slather your skin in sunscreen, but did you know that a turkey sandwich may offer some protection against skin damage due to the selenium it contains? Recent research¹ found that a diet rich in selenium was associated with an almost 60 per cent reduced risk of skin cancer. "Selenium is a powerful anti-oxidant," confirms Palinski. "It may protect skin cells from mutations brought on by free-radical damage, therefore preventing skin cancer."
How much should you be eating?
 Try an 85g serving of skinless turkey breast (about four slices) several times per week.



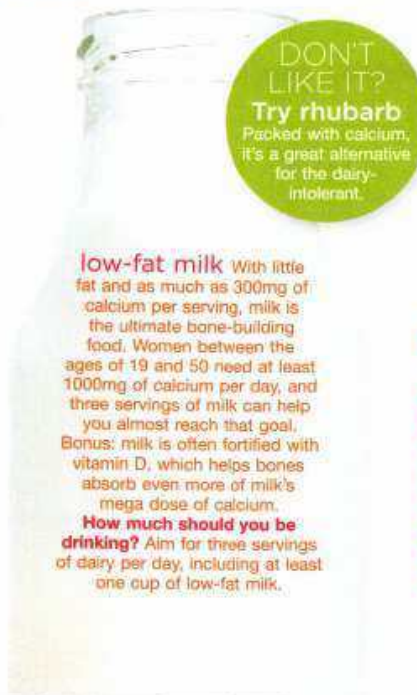
blueberries Fight signs of premature ageing, like wrinkles and saggy skin, with blueberries, which boast one of the highest anti-oxidant contents of all fruits and vegetables, according to a 2004 study.
How much should you be eating?
 Aim for a one-cup serving at least three times per week. And, just like cherries, frozen blueberries are just as beneficial as fresh ones, say experts.

bone builders

Prevent early-onset osteoporosis and brittle limbs with these bone-boosting foods



almonds Rich in magnesium, a nutrient that, along with calcium, is important for bone health, a 30g portion (about 30 almonds) serves up almost 100mg of magnesium – about 25 per cent of your daily needs. "Magnesium helps keep bones strong, protecting against injury and brittleness," states Gans, "and in moderation, almonds make a great bone-building snack."
How much should you be eating?
 Snack on almonds a few times a week, or add chopped ones to oatmeal and salads.



low-fat milk With little fat and as much as 300mg of calcium per serving, milk is the ultimate bone-building food. Women between the ages of 19 and 50 need at least 1000mg of calcium per day, and three servings of milk can help you almost reach that goal. Bonus: milk is often fortified with vitamin D, which helps bones absorb even more of milk's mega dose of calcium.
How much should you be drinking? Aim for three servings of dairy per day, including at least one cup of low-fat milk.



prunes According to a study by researchers at Florida State University², prunes, which are high in potassium, fibre and anti-oxidants, may be one of the most important fruits for preventing and reversing bone loss. "Prunes are loaded with two bone-building essentials – phenolic compounds and the trace mineral boron," explains Palinski.
How much should you be eating?
 Snack on a serving of six prunes a few times a week.

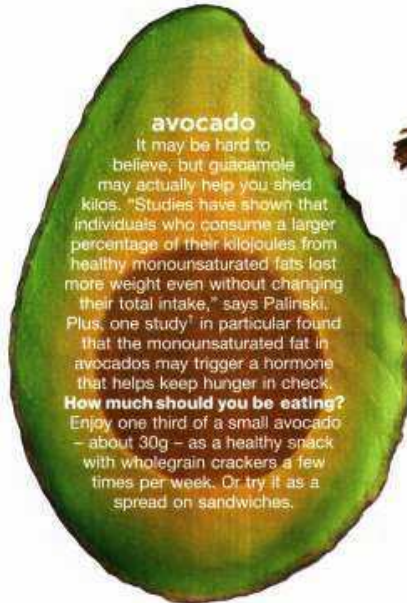
PHOTOGRAPHED BY GETTY IMAGES. ¹CANCER EPIDEMIOLOGY, BIOMARKERS & PREVENTION VOL. 18, 1167 (2009). ²JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD CHEMISTRY VOL. 52, NO. 12, 4028-4037 (2004). ³CELL METABOLISM VOL. 8, NO. 4, 281-288 (2008). TAGGING RESEARCH REVIEWS VOL. 8, NO. 2, 122-127 (2008). ⁴FOR MEDICAL TOPICS 73 (2000). EXPERT ADVICE IS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES ONLY AND IS NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL ADVICE OR TO BE RELIED ON FOR DIAGNOSIS OR TREATMENT. ALWAYS SEEK THE ADVICE OF A QUALIFIED MEDICAL PRACTITIONER IF YOU THINK YOU ARE SUFFERING FROM A MEDICAL CONDITION.



greek yoghurt Trying to lose extra kilos? According to research by experts at the University of Tennessee in 2003, a daily serving of low-fat yoghurt may help you blast fat while maintaining muscle. Study participants who incorporated yoghurt into their diets lost 22 per cent more weight, 61 per cent more body fat and 81 per cent more belly fat in 12 weeks than those who didn't eat yoghurt. But choose low-fat Greek yoghurt over other varieties, suggests Gans. "It contains more than double the satiating protein found in other yoghurt, which can go a long way to keeping you feeling full."
How much should you be eating?
 Make yoghurt one of your three servings of dairy per day.

metabolism managers

Keep your engine running and your blood sugar in check with these foods that promote weight loss, naturally.



avocado

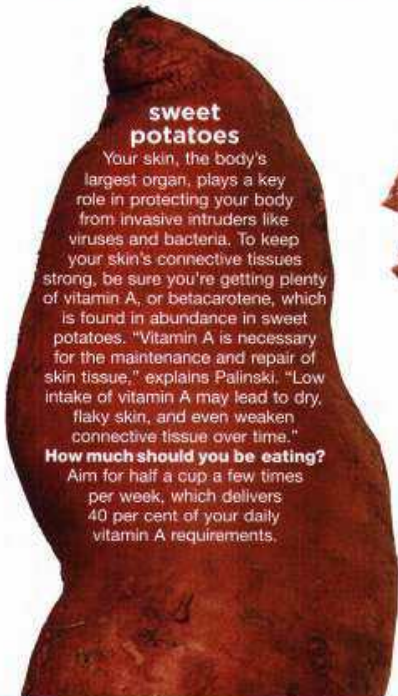
It may be hard to believe, but guacamole may actually help you shed kilos. "Studies have shown that individuals who consume a larger percentage of their kilojoules from healthy monounsaturated fats lost more weight even without changing their total intake," says Palinski. Plus, one study¹ in particular found that the monounsaturated fat in avocados may trigger a hormone that helps keep hunger in check.
How much should you be eating?
 Enjoy one third of a small avocado – about 30g – as a healthy snack with wholegrain crackers a few times per week. Or try it as a spread on sandwiches.



cinnamon Do you feel weak and low on energy every morning a few hours after breakfast? Maybe you should try adding cinnamon to your breakfast. "Spikes and drops in blood sugar can trigger hunger and cravings," explains Palinski, who adds that adding cinnamon to meals may help stabilise blood sugar and regulate appetite.
How much should you be eating?
 While there is no recommended serving size, most experts agree that a little goes a long way – so half a teaspoon at breakfast is a great start.

immunity boosters

Guard against everything from colds to cancer with these powerful, nutrient-rich foods



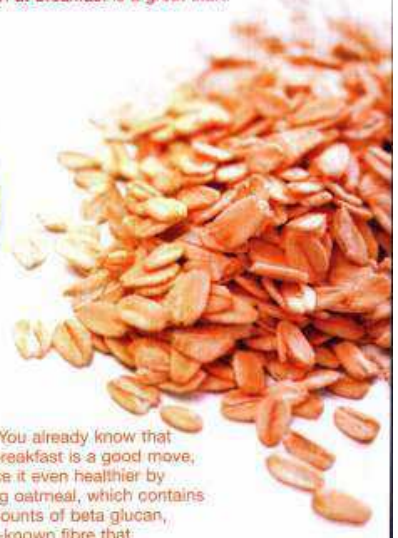
sweet potatoes

Your skin, the body's largest organ, plays a key role in protecting your body from invasive intruders like viruses and bacteria. To keep your skin's connective tissues strong, be sure you're getting plenty of vitamin A, or beta-carotene, which is found in abundance in sweet potatoes. "Vitamin A is necessary for the maintenance and repair of skin tissue," explains Palinski. "Low intake of vitamin A may lead to dry, flaky skin, and even weaken connective tissue over time."
How much should you be eating?
 Aim for half a cup a few times per week, which delivers 40 per cent of your daily vitamin A requirements.



DON'T LIKE IT? Try pumpkin seeds Loaded with immunity-boosting zinc.

beef While it may not sound like a superfood, lean beef is a great source of zinc, a mineral known to boost your immune system by helping your body produce white blood cells that fight infections and zap bacteria and viruses.
How much should you be eating?
 An 85g serving of lean beef (about the size of a deck of cards) gives you 30 per cent of your daily zinc needs. Eat lean beef – like flank, sirloin or hanger steak – as much as three times per week, recommends Gans.



oats You already know that eating breakfast is a good move, but make it even healthier by choosing oatmeal, which contains high amounts of beta glucan, a lesser-known fibre that Norwegian researchers² say has anti-oxidant and antimicrobial powers, which may help wounds heal faster and make antibiotics work better. Bonus: "Oatmeal is high in cholesterol-lowering soluble fibre," adds Palinski.
How much should you be eating?
 A daily bowl of oatmeal can go a long way in keeping your immune system strong, says Gans. ■