

# HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

## A prescription from your pantry and fridge

By FUAD AL-QUDSI

**PREVENTIVE NUTRITION** could be defined as a style of eating that lowers the risk of developing chronic diseases. Excess inflammation is thought to play a role in chronic problems such as heart disease, diabetes and some cancers. This inflammation can be caused by stress and the environment, but the most controllable factors are lifestyle habits, such as smoking, alcohol use and a poor diet. Therefore, health experts recommend following an anti-inflammatory diet to combat free radicals that cause inflammation. Here are some anti-inflammatory foods and how to incorporate them into a healthful diet.

### Fruits and vegetables

Though you hear a lot about eating your greens, that's just a small part of fruit and vegetable intake. It's important to eat a wide range of produce of all different colors to optimally manage inflammation. That's because each color represents a different antioxidant. For example, orange vegetables are rich in beta carotene (which your body uses to make vitamin A) and red vegetables contain lycopene (associated with lower risk of some cancers). That's why "eating the rainbow" is vital for battling inflammation. Ideally, you want non-starchy fruits and vegetables to make up 50 percent of your meal as science has shown this is the most effective food group at battling chronic disease.





Fuad Al Qudsi

### Whole grains

Whole grains promote health not only because they are rich in fiber which can support

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heart health and manage hunger, but they also contain substantially more vitamins and minerals than their refined counterparts like white rice, white bread and white pasta. Oats, quinoa, bulgur, brown and black rice are also considered whole grains. Try to choose whole grains as a carb source whenever possible and strive to make it 25 percent of your meal or plate.

**Lean protein**

Lean protein has a low saturated fat content relative to the amount of protein it contains. For example, chicken breast is considered leaner than a pork chop because 3 ounces of chicken breast has about 150 calories and 26 grams of protein. However, the same amount of a pork chop only has 20 grams of protein, but 200 calories.

The extra calories come from saturated fat, which is a big culprit in heart disease and has been known to cause inflammation. Real meat from animals is high quality protein. Just be sure to check labels for the saturated fat content. Plant-based proteins like tofu, soybeans, edamame, lentils and beans, as well as low-fat dairy like skim milk

and non-fat Greek yogurt are also sources to consider. Make lean proteins 25 percent of your meal or plate.

**Healthy fats**

As mentioned, saturated fat has a powerful ability to cause chronic inflammation. Thus, it's important to replace it with unsaturated fat whenever possible. These heart-healthy fats are mainly found in plant foods like vegetable oils, olives, avocados, nuts, nut butters and seeds. However, they can also be found in fatty fish like salmon and sardines. Populations that make these foods their main fat source, like those living in the Mediterranean region, have been shown to have some of the lowest cancer rates in the world and many attribute it to their diet.

**Sample 1-Day Meal Plan**

**Omnivore Meal Plan**

- BREAKFAST**
- ¾ cup high-fiber cereal
- 1 cup skim milk
- 1 medium banana
- 1 cup orange juice
- LUNCH**

- Chicken breast sandwich
- 3 ounces sliced chicken breast
- 2 slices whole wheat bread
- 1 slice cheddar cheese, reduced-fat
- 2 slices tomato
- 1 tablespoon low-fat mayonnaise
- 1 cup pineapple chunks
- 1 cup apple juice
- DINNER**
- 3 ounces cooked salmon
- 1 small baked potato with
- 1 tablespoon fat-free sour cream
- 2 tablespoons chopped green onions
- 1 cup spinach, sautéed
- 1 small whole wheat roll
- 2 kiwi fruits

**Vegetarian Meal Plan**

- BREAKFAST**
- 1 cup cooked oatmeal
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter

MENUS con't. page 45A



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- 1 medium orange
- 1 cup soy milk, unsweetened

**LUNCH**

- Rice and bean burrito:
  - ½ cup black beans, cooked
  - ½ cup brown rice, cooked
  - ½ avocado, sliced
  - 1 whole wheat tortilla

- 1 medium apple
- 1 cup soy milk

**DINNER**

- Tofu salad:
  - 4 ounces of roasted tofu
  - 1 cup fresh spinach leaves

- 1 cup grape tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons croutons
- 1 tablespoon vinaigrette dressing
- 1 tablespoon sunflower seeds
- 1 small whole wheat roll
- 1 orange

These are just examples, but as you can see, eating to avoid disease doesn't have to be complicated or dull.

If you want more information, consult your doctor or a registered dietitian.

*Fuad Al Qudsi is a registered dietitian with a bachelor's degree in human nutrition and food science. You can learn more about him by visiting his website, fuadfit.com.*



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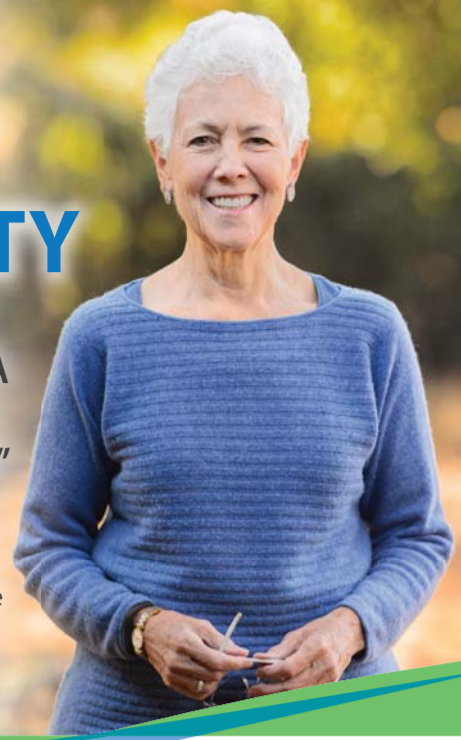
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