15 Superfoods
Secrets for a Long and Healthy Life!

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Broccoli

We’ll start with the scientific consensus: A diet rich in fruits and vegetables, high in nutrients and low in calories, is your best bet for a long life.

Need specifics? Eat more broccoli, grapes, and salad: Researchers have found that compounds in these three foods pack extra life-extending benefits.
These bite-sized fruit favorites are chock full of antioxidants, known to boost immunity and stave off life-threatening disease. They’ll help you age gracefully as well. A 2012 study from Harvard University found that at least one serving of blueberries or two servings of strawberries each week may reduce the risk of cognitive decline in older adults.
Garlic

At a Pennsylvania banquet celebrating centenarians last spring, Nancy Fisher, 107, attributed her long life to her faith ... and her passion for garlic.

Fisher may be on to something: Studies have found that phytochemicals in garlic can halt the formation of carcinogenic chemicals in the body, and that women who eat more garlic have lower risk of certain colon cancers.

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As delicious as it is healthy, this mono-unsaturated “good fat” is well known for its heart-health and longevity benefits. Studies also show that olive oil may also be linked to brain health and cancer prevention. Aim for two tablespoons a day.
Avocado

How to prevent heart disease, the largest killer in the United States, according to the latest report from the National Center of Health Statistics? Eat more foods that help keep your heart healthy, like avocados, and improve your odds of a long life. Avocados can lower your LDL “bad” cholesterol while raising your HDL “good” levels, and they help your body absorb heart-healthy vitamins like beta-carotene and lycopene.
Lycopene is an important nutrient in the fight against cancer — the second leading cause of death in the United States. And there’s no better source than rosy red tomatoes. Eating them cooked, in pasta sauce, tomato soup, or chutney actually increases the amount of carcinogen-fighting carotenoids your body is able to absorb.
Beans, beans, are good for your life? In a 2004 study conducted on elderly people in Australia, Japan, Sweden, and Greece, researchers found that participants had a 7% to 8% reduction in death for every 20 grams of legumes they consumed daily. A diet rich in beans and legumes increases levels of the fatty acid butyrate, which can protect against cancer growth, according to a study from Michigan State University.
Grains

Getting more fiber — specifically by switching from refined bread and pasta to whole grains — can reduce your risk of death from any cause by 22%, according to a 2011 study published in the Archives of Internal Medicine.

Experts say that fiber can protect against diabetes, heart disease, some cancers, and obesity, and can reduce cholesterol, blood sugar, and blood pressure.
Moderate Alcohol

Several studies have suggested that small amounts of alcohol — no more than two drinks a day for men and one drink a day for women — can have heart-healthy benefits, and that moderate drinkers tend to live longer than heavier imbibers or teetotalers. A 2012 Harvard Medical School study also found that moderate drinking may also reduce men’s risk of death in the two decades following a heart attack.
A 2008 study from researchers at Harvard University found that, compared with non-coffee drinkers, women had an 18% lower risk of dying if they drank two to three cups a day, and 26% lower if they drank four to five cups a day. Those who drank six or more a day decreased their risk by 17%.

A 2012 study by the National Institutes of Health and AARP supports this theory. When researchers controlled for factors like smoking, drinking, and eating red meat, they found that coffee drinkers — both men and women — tended to live longer.
Less Red Meat

Going vegetarian a few times a week may lengthen your life. People who eat red meat every day have a higher risk of dying over a 10-year period than those who eat it less, according to a 2009 study from the University of North Carolina. (Most deaths in the study were from heart disease and cancer.) Burgers, steak, and pork were partially to blame, but processed meats — like bacon, ham, and hot dogs — also seemed responsible for shorter lifespans.
A recent Harvard study found that red meat consumption is linked with a greater risk of death from cancer, heart disease, and all causes. But the study also looked at the benefit of substituting healthier protein sources, such as fish, poultry, nuts, and legumes. Of all the swaps studied, the researchers found that trading a serving of beef or pork for one of nuts could reduce a person’s risk of death during middle age by 19%.
Red meat may be a no-no when it comes to longevity, but plant-based foods of the same hue are a definite yes. Eating fruits and vegetables in a variety of bold, bright colors is a good way to make sure you’re getting a good mix of nutrients, and experts say that red ones, specifically, can help you stay young. Among your best bets: red cabbage to guard against cancer and boost brain health, beet juice to lower blood pressure, and tomatoes to lower cholesterol.
Salmon, tuna, and other oily fish can help patients with heart disease live longer, studies have shown, because their omega-3 fatty acids help fight dangerous inflammation that can damage our DNA. The same may be true for the rest of us, as well: A 2009 study from the University of Hawaii found that men who ate the most baked or boiled fish — as opposed to fried, dried, or salted — reduced their risk of heart-disease related death by 23% compared to those who ate the least. (The study also found that women who ate low-sodium soy sauce or tofu also saw heart-health benefits.)
Mediterranean diet

Healthy fats from fish, olive oil, and nuts meet lean protein, fruits, and vegetables, and moderate amounts of wine in the Mediterranean diet popular in Greece and Italy. This combination has been linked again and again in studies to longer life, healthier hearts, and lower rates of cancer, obesity, and Alzheimer’s disease. Mediterranean cultures also tend to treat mealtime as an important social event, sitting down at the table with the whole family.