Food is simple but deciding what to buy and eat has become beyond complicated. For starters, today's shoppers are greeted with an overwhelming array of choices. We are also continuously besieged with a steady onslaught of email, books, magazine articles, news reports and anecdotal testimonials from friends and family about what to eat—and what to avoid like the plague. And just to complicate things further, each source differs. Just thinking about it can make your head spin.

On the theme of keeping things simple, we've put together some fundamentals that can help you improve your health (see the following list of our top 6 superfoods) and become a more confident shopper (see tips for buying organic foods and prepackaged items on p. 52). We've also included some essential guidelines for reading labels—one of the most important keys to improving your diet.
Simplify your life—and boost your health—with these basic foods that really work

By Lisa Turner

You can nibble on goji berries, whip up noni juice smoothies and stock your shelves with antioxidants. But if you’re looking for what really works for optimal health and disease prevention, the best approach is to focus on foods that are rich in disease-fighting phytochemicals.

“Basic foods that have proven health benefits are what we want to emphasize,” says Steven Pratt, MD, author of SuperFoods Healthstyle. “For example, blueberries, broccoli and tomatoes have a large number of peer-reviewed published studies substantiating their health benefits. These foods are readily available, inexpensive and have other benefits, such as high fiber content. And they’ve been used for years, with no drawbacks, side effects or toxicity; you’re never going to see a headline that blueberries are bad for you.”

None of the foods on this top 6 list will surprise you, but they may inspire you and help you feel good about the food you eat.
1. **Broccoli**
   It's still true: few foods measure up to broccoli for cancer-fighting potential. Broccoli is rich in sulforaphane, an antioxidant linked with a reduced risk of a number of cancers, especially lung, stomach, colon and rectal cancers. "The phytonutrients in broccoli help detoxify carcinogens found in the environment," says Pratt. "They also have anti-inflammatory properties, and we know that an important factor in reducing the risk of disease is to decrease inflammation."
   **How to eat more:** Sauté broccoli florets with shallots and pine nuts, and drizzle with lemon juice; steam broccoli rabe and toss with a honey-mustard dressing.

2. **Pumpkin**
   It's not just for pie: pumpkin is one of the best sources of carotenoids, antioxidants that reduce the risk of cancer. Like sweet potatoes, carrots, butternut squash and other orange-red vegetables, pumpkin is rich in disease-preventive beta-carotene. "And pumpkin is also one of the highest sources of alpha-carotene, a powerful member of the carotenoid family that's inversely related to cataract formation and boosts immunity," Pratt says. **How to eat more:** Serve warm pumpkin puree with maple syrup and finely chopped pecans; make a simple pumpkin soup with pumpkin purée, vegetable or chicken stock, onions, black beans, cumin and cilantro.

3. **Blueberries**
   Fragrant and sweet, blueberries are rich in anthocyanidins, compounds that help protect the heart, and may inhibit the growth of cancer cells. Studies suggest the blueberry anthocyanidins protect against neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s, and can slow and even reverse age-related memory loss and decline in cognitive function. **How to eat more:** Toss fresh blueberries with baby spinach leaves, chopped walnuts, thinly sliced red onions and olive oil; combine chopped blueberries, diced mango, minced jalapeño peppers and cilantro with lime juice for a tangy salsa.

4. **Fish**
   It's a great catch in terms of heart disease. Salmon and other fatty fish—like mackerel, lake trout, herring, sardines and tuna—are rich in omega-3 fatty acids that decrease the risk of heart attack and stroke, and may cut your risk of death from coronary artery disease in half. Omega-3 fats also have immune-enhancing and anti-inflammatory effects, reduce the risk of prostate and colon cancers, and ease the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis and some psychiatric disorders. **How to eat more:** Top braised spinach with poached salmon, chopped tomatoes and black olives; combine chopped, cooked salmon with capers, minced onion, lemon juice and olive oil, and serve on crackers.

5. **Spinach**
   Boost your vision and protect against cancer with spinach, one of the richest dietary sources of an antioxidant called lutein. Lutein helps protect against heart disease and some cancers, and has been shown to reduce the risk of cataracts and macular degeneration. Spinach is also rich in beta-carotene, which may protect against cancer. Other lutein-rich foods include kale, collard greens, chard and beet greens. **How to eat more:** Sauté baby spinach, diced tomatoes, minced garlic and red pepper flakes in olive oil; toss steamed spinach with tamari, toasted sesame oil and sesame seeds.

6. **Tomatoes**
   Another reason to eat pizza: tomatoes are loaded with lycopene, an antioxidant that reduces the risk of prostate, breast, lung and other cancers, and has heart-protective effects. Research shows that the absorption of lycopene is greatest when tomatoes are cooked with olive oil. In one study, a combination of tomato and broccoli was more effective at slowing tumor growth than tomatoes or broccoli alone. **How to eat more:** Simmer chopped tomatoes and broccoli in olive oil, top with black olives and grated Asiago cheese; drizzle halved Roma tomatoes with olive oil, sprinkle with pepper and minced rosemary leaves, and roast.

---

In honor of our commitment to help preserve our natural resources, Zia Skin Basics has joined efforts with American Forests' Global ReLeaf Project and will donate a portion of our proceeds to planting trees.

**Eco-Lifestyle Tips:**
1. When you give gifts, give trees
2. Only use canvas bags at the market
3. Always choose organic food

**ZIA NATURAL SKINCARE**
800.334.SKIN www.zianatural.com
FILL UP, SLIM DOWN

The Fiber35 Diet FitSmart Shake is a nutrient-rich meal supplement that you can enjoy with or between meals for a great-tasting energy boost. Each serving contains 20g of whey protein and 10g of soluble acacia fiber to help fill your stomach and leave you feeling satisfied. Available in chocolate, strawberry and vanilla.

TEST THE WATERS

Touted as one of the world's best-tasting bottled waters, Le Bleu Premium Ultra Pure Water boasts a patent-pending purification process. Both doctors and nutritionists have been known to recommend the water for its taste and purity.

Shopping the center aisles

Fresh food is always the best option but convenience demands some additional choices. Here's a look at what foods are new at health food stores and how to pick wholesome products for you and your family.

Packaged Foods: Better than Ever

On the shelf and in the freezer, the quality of packaged foods is improving in the following ways:

• Added nutrients: Omega-3 fats, probiotics, antioxidants and fiber are some of the top types of nutrients being added to foods to improve their nutritional benefits.

• Omitted ingredients: Trans fats, processed sweeteners, artificial flavors, colors and preservatives are typically missing from products found in health food stores.

• Simpler food: More frozen and packaged foods are being made with fewer ingredients and less processing, aiming to keep food closer to its original state while giving it added shelf life to meet the needs of busy lifestyles.

Snack Foods: So Many Healthy Options

Whole grains, nuts and dried fruit without additives all contribute to better snack foods. Variety is also increasing. Low-calorie dried fruit or vegetables can be made into chips. And more options are available for those who avoid dairy or gluten; some cookies and ice creams are now made without these ingredients.

Continued on p. 55
ORGANIC PRODUCTS, AT A GLANCE

Products or ingredients that are certified organic must be produced according to set criteria, including the following:

- Without the use of synthetic herbicides and pesticides, genetically modified organisms (GMOs), irradiation or the use of processed sewage sludge on crops.
- Organic farmland must be free of chemical application for at least three years.
- Livestock must eat organically grown feed without any animal by-products, must have access to pasture and cannot be given growth hormone or antibiotics.

THE NUMBERS GAME

The proportions of organic ingredients in products vary. For example:

- If label says: % of organic:
  - 100% organic 100%
  - Organic 95%
  - Made with organic ingredients 70%

Also, when one or more ingredients are organic but make up less than 70%, “organic” can be used only to describe the ingredient on the ingredient list, not the overall product.

THE TRUTH ABOUT “NATURAL” FOODS

The term natural is defined only as it applies to meat and poultry, and even then, it’s somewhat ambiguous. In 1982, the USDA established that natural meat and poultry should contain no artificial flavors, colors, chemical preservatives or any other synthetic ingredients, and that it should be minimally processed. The definition says nothing about how an animal was raised; therefore, meat classified as natural may have been given growth hormones and antibiotics and fed animal by-products.

The FDA, which regulates other food labels, is considering establishing guidelines for natural food products, but it’s unlikely that anything will transpire in the short term. In addition, the Natural Products Association, the trade group of the natural products industry, is working to establish a definition for “natural.”

Despite the confusion, health food stores sell meat, poultry and other foods that are truly natural. Sometimes foods don’t meet all the requirements to be certified organic but are still a better choice than conventional products. Ask the staff in your local health food store for more information.

New research confirms it: When it comes to heart-healthy eating, veggies rule. Now let’s talk specifics. A recent study found that a mixture of five popular vegetables—peas, carrots, corn, green beans and broccoli—can actually halt hardening of the arteries by 38%. That’s significant news because a diet that inhibits the development of atherosclerosis will reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke.

Now, if plates full of produce seem tough to tackle, take heart. You can get your veggies in an easy, delicious—and even more nutritious way— with the Vita-Mix® Super 5000. Think smooth, satisfying whole food juice or vegetable soup. You can make juice in a minute or soup from scratch in just five minutes. (The powerful Vita-Mix® machine motor, actually cooks soup by friction heat.) Prep time is next to nothing because you use the whole food—skins, seeds, stalks—and that means you save money, too.

Here’s the life-saving part: Vita-Mix processing breaks open the cell walls of good-for-you vegetables, releasing valuable nutrition you can’t get any other way. Fabulous flavor is the bonus.

Don’t take our word for it.
Try the Vita-Mix machine RISK-FREE for 30 days.

CALL 1-800-VITAMIX
and take us up on this amazing offer TODAY!

Use this savings code and get FIVE FREE GIFTS:
04-0030-0056

www.vitamix.com/ad7/stayalivebn2
Health food stores carry better quality energy drinks, fruit juices, sodas and premium sparkling and bottled waters.

GOAT MILK BUTTER
Meyenberg’s European Style
Goat Milk Butter, awarded first place in the American Cheese Society’s 2006 Annual Cheese Competition, is light on the palate yet has a rich, creamy flavor. Other distinctive characteristics include its pure white color, due to the absence of carotene, and its lower melting point, which makes it ideally suited as a smooth spread. Try in sauces, or for baking and sautéing. It can also be used in recipes calling for salted or unsalted butter.

TIPS FOR PICKING HIGH-QUALITY PRODUCTS

Elisa Zied, MS, RD, and Ruth Winter, MS, authors of *Feed Your Family Right!* recommend adhering to the following guidelines when shopping for various foodstuffs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>What You Want</th>
<th>What You Don’t Want</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breads and crackers</td>
<td>• The first ingredient is a whole grain</td>
<td>• Saturated fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 3g or less of fat</td>
<td>• Trans fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 3–5g fiber per serving</td>
<td>• Added sugars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot and cold cereals</td>
<td>• The first ingredient is a whole grain</td>
<td>• More than 10g sugar per serving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 3g or less of fat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 3–5g fiber per serving</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasta, rice, frozen waffles and pancakes</td>
<td>• The first ingredient is a whole grain</td>
<td>• Saturated fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 3g or less of fat</td>
<td>• Trans fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 3–5g fiber per serving</td>
<td>• Added sugars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frozen or canned fruits and vegetables</td>
<td>• Unsweetened</td>
<td>• Canned fruits in light or heavy syrup, or candied fruits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• For canned fruits: Packed in water or in its own juices</td>
<td>• Vegetable juices with more than 140mg sodium per serving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Juices from 100% fruit juice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SLEUTHING OUT SUGAR

A sugar by any other name truly is just as sweet—and can impact your blood sugar levels and health in the same way as table sugar. Here are some common sugar aliases:

- Corn sweetener
- Corn syrup
- Dextrose
- Fructose
- Glucose
- High-fructose corn syrup
- Honey
- Lactose
- Maltose
- Malt syrup
- Molasses
- Sucrose
- Syrup

coffee alternatives present a variety of options.

Beverages: What You Drink Matters, Too

Soymilk has become mainstream, but health food stores offer organic and non-GMO versions, plus a wide variety of other types of milk substitutes, such as almond and rice milks, and hemp milk, a recent arrival in original, vanilla and chocolate flavors. Health food stores also carry better quality energy drinks, fruit juices, sodas and premium sparkling and bottled waters (now infused with oxygen, added vitamins and minerals, etc.).

Baked Goodies: Close to Homemade

Compare the ingredient label of a typical loaf of bread or muffin in a conventional supermarket to similar items in a health food store and the difference is obvious. The health food store versions contain about the same number of ingredients you would use in your own kitchen; conventional versions seem to contain never-ending lists of unpronounceable substances. Health food stores also offer bigger selections of gluten-free, vegan and dairy-free items made with a variety of whole grains.

Nutrition Bars and Meal Supplements: Perfect for Busy Days

Although all food stores today offer plenty of these, health food store offerings tend to be more ingredient conscious. Protein powders and ready-to-drink meal supplements typically include whey, soy or rice proteins and some contain vitamin, mineral and green-food supplements. Nutrition bars cater to many tastes, and some contain only raw foods with their natural enzymes intact to aid digestion and nutrient absorption.

Coffee and Tea: Go for High Quality and Superior Taste

Premium quality and organic and fair-trade versions of coffee and tea, with and without caffeine, offer plenty of choices for hot and homemade iced drinks. In addition, herbal teas in many flavors, coffee-style drinks made from yerba mate and caffeine-free

Water Scams Exposed

Truth revealed about:
- spring
- mineral
- filtered
- bottled
- distilled
- alkalized
- reverse osmosis
- oxygenated...

Which one is best for you?

FREE $5.00 value

Report & Catalog
1-800-874-9028
www.waterwise.com

better nutrition

We’d like to hear from you!

Do you have an opinion you’d like to share?

Join our free Reader Council and become part of an exclusive group of Better Nutrition readers.

From time to time, we’ll invite you to participate in surveys, send you product samples, and enter you in Better Nutrition sweepstakes.

All of this, just for sharing your opinions.

All participants who sign up are automatically entered to win a $250 American Express Gift Card.

Join now!
betternutritionreadercouncil.com

Sweepstakes rules and regulations can be found at betternutritionreadercouncil.com