



Eat your medicine

By Nancy Stohs and Karen Herzog
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Diet is key weapon in fight against 4 common diseases

When you have a bacterial infection, you get an antibiotic. When you want to give up smoking, you get a nicotine patch. If you could do something to lower your risk of cancer, heart disease or other serious ailments, why wouldn't you do it?

Because you might not like the prescription: Lots of fruits and vegetables. Fish. Whole grains. Nuts. Limited amounts of red meat. And plenty of exercise.

The list of "good" foods and "bad" foods seems to change from week to week, which can make us want to throw up our hands and say fine, I'll eat whatever I want.

But in fact, for some common life-threatening diseases, the link to diet is strong and well-documented.

Here's a look at four such diseases: cancer, heart disease, diabetes and osteoporosis. In each case, the right dietary choices can at least minimize the risk of developing the condition, if not outright prevent it.

We talked to the experts and capsulized the latest advice into a handy stay-healthy guide.

A few generalities emerged: There are no magic foods. And the diets they propound are strikingly similar, even as research continues.

Cancer

For the majority of Americans who don't smoke, eating a healthful diet and being physically active can reduce cancer risks, according to the American Cancer Society.

Evidence suggests one-third of the 550,000 cancer deaths that occur in the United States each year are due to unhealthy diet and lack of physical activity.

The American Institute for Cancer Research recommends a mostly plant-based diet of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes, with a reduced emphasis on meat.

A diet low in fat that includes a wide variety of at least five servings of fruits and vegetables daily can decrease overall incidence of cancer by 20 percent, according to the institute. The case is even stronger with colorectal cancer, where the main causes are believed to be diet and related factors, though much more is known about colon than about rectal cancer, according to the American Institute for Cancer Research.

Research suggests up to half of colorectal cancers could be prevented by diets high in vegetables and low in fat. Colon and rectal cancers are not the same, but usually are categorized together.

Eating vegetables in a rainbow of colors provides the best arsenal of protective phytochemicals. When choosing salad greens, remember the darkest greens are the most nutritious and may provide the best protection.

Heart Disease

The No. 1 killer of Americans, and a key cause of disability, is heart disease, stroke and other cardiovascular diseases.

Heart disease alone is the No. 1 killer and stroke is the No. 3. About 62 million Americans live with cardiovascular diseases, according to the American Heart Association.

Cardiovascular diseases cost Americans more than any other disease- a projected \$352 billion in medical expenses and lost productivity this year.

Artery-clogging cholesterol is the most widely publicized culprit in increasing the risk of cardiovascular disease and 42 million Americans have high cholesterol levels, the association reports.

Dietary cholesterol- found in foods such as eggs and red meat- should be limited to no more than 300mg per day for the average person and less than 200 mg for people at risk.

The heart association recommends eating lots of fruits and vegetables, which are good sources of vitamins, minerals and fiber, but have few calories, little fat or sodium and no cholesterol.

The association three years ago placed a new focus on an overall dietary pattern. The recommendations are: at least five servings of fruits and vegetables daily; six or more servings of whole grains and beans; a varied diet including the major food groups; and at least two servings of fatty fish, such as tuna or salmon.

The association recommends a diet moderate in sugar, because of the link to high consumption of sweets to obesity.

Diabetes

About 17 million people in the United States, or 6.2 percent of the population, have diabetes, according to the American Diabetes Association. An estimated 11.1 million have been diagnosed; about 5.9 million are unaware they have the disease.

The best dietary advice in the quest to fend off diabetes is simply this: Lose weight if you're overweight and follow a diet that permits you to maintain a healthy weight.

Being overweight, along with family history, are the biggest risk factors for diabetes. It's also important to stay physically active - "We are really trying diligently not to separate those two," said Marian Benz, a registered dietitian and certified diabetes educator in Milwaukee.

The concern about being overweight extends to children, who are exhibiting in adolescence a whole new type of diabetes, Benz said- not type 1 (insulin-dependent, previously known as juvenile diabetes) or type 2 (non-insulin dependent).

Children's Hospital of Wisconsin works with more than 1,000

type 1 children in its diabetes education program and now has about 100 with this new type, called maturity-onset diabetes of youth.

While much is yet unknown, it is believed that this form of diabetes is caused by excess weight and ought to be preventable through proper diet and weight control.

Osteoporosis

About 10 million people (four in five of them women) are estimated to have osteoporosis. It is responsible for more than 1.5 million fractures annually, according to the National Osteoporosis Foundation.

The dietary prescription for reducing this risk is simple and well-documented: a high intake of calcium, protein and vitamin D. Calcium and protein each make up about half the volume of bone; by weight, protein is about one-third, said Robert P. Heaney, professor of medicine at Creighton University in Omaha, Neb., who has been working in the bone field since 1955.

In one recent study, the lowest rate of bone loss was found in women with the highest protein intake and vice-versa. There was a fourfold difference.

"We focus on calcium because it is the nutrient more likely to be deficient in the American diet," Heaney said. "(However,) my suspicion is that a substantial fraction of the American population today (also) does not get enough protein."

Throughout our lives, bones are constantly changing, or "remodeling," to adapt to changing uses and demands or to make repairs.

Bones can recycle stored calcium and phosphorus but not protein.

"So we need a fresh supply of dietary protein every day," Heaney said. Meat and plant protein are equally effective.

The third key nutrient, vitamin D, is needed to absorb an adequate amount of calcium.

"What people don't realize is how prevalent vitamin D deficiency is in North America," Heaney said.

A 1998 study of 290 patients admitted to Massachusetts General Hospital's medical service found 57 percent to be deficient in vitamin D. By current standards subscribed to by researchers, Heaney said, it would be more like 85 percent.

Vitamin D is added to foods, and "a couple of boutique yogurts may have it added. (Otherwise), unless you eat a lot of fish oil, or get plenty of sun exposure, you aren't going to get enough" and supplements may be necessary, he said.

Specific recommendations for this trio of nutrients are:

Calcium: The RDA differs by age and gender, from 800 to 1,500 milligrams a day, but those are really "the least you can get by on," according to Heaney. He advises everyone from adolescence on up to consume from 1,200 to 1,500mg each day.

Vitamin D: The latest official recommendations, from 1997, call for 200 International Units a day to age 50; 400IU to age 70; and 600IU after 70.

"If we knew then what we know now, they would be much higher numbers," said Heaney, who added that he routinely prescribes 1,000 units per day.

Protein: 0.8 grams per kilogram of body weight. (Multiply your weight in pounds by 0.45 to find your weight in kilograms.) By this measure, a weight of 150 pounds calls for a diet with 54g of protein daily. Some expert believe this isn't high enough, Heaney said.

Greens First may be your Best Defense Against Disease.

Did you know that 5-13 servings of fruits and vegetables daily is what is commonly recommended for optimum health? Are you getting enough?

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- Fight Aging
- Assist in Healthy Weight Management
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- Support Low Cal/Low Carb Lifestyle

Supplement Facts	
Serving Size 9.4 g (1 Scoop)	
Servings Per Container: 30	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 45 Calories from fat 17	
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat <2g	3.10%
Saturated Fat <.5g	2.50%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0g	0.00%
Sodium 17mg	0.80%
Total Carbohydrate <6g	2.00%
Dietary Fiber <1g	4.10%
Sugars <1g	
Protein 1g	2.00%
Amount Per Serving 5.0%	
Greens Blend-Proprietary	2500 mg †
Barley Grass Juice Powder (Certified Organic)	
Chlorella (Japanese Cracked Cell Wall)	
Spirulina, USA (Certified Organic)	
Vegetable Blend-Proprietary	1500 mg †
(Certified Organic)	
Carrot Juice Powder, Cauliflower Juice Powder, Broccoli Juice Powder, Spinach Juice Powder, Parsley Juice Powder, Kale Juices Powder	
OxiSure™ Blend-Proprietary	300 mg †
Carrot Powder, Green Tea Extract, Blueberry Powder, Plum Powder, Grape Seed Extract 95%, Cranberry Powder, Raspberry Powder, Tart Cherry Powder, Pine Bark Extract 95%, Broccoli Powder, 'HiActives' Tomato Powder 2000, 'HiActives' Carrot Powder 1200, 'HiActives' Spinach Powder 700, 'HiActives' Kale Powder, 'HiActives' Brussels Sprout Powder.	
Amount Per Serving 5.0%	
Fiber Blend-Proprietary	1950 mg †
Oat Betagelucan (Certified Organic)	
Apple Fiber Pectin, Brown Rice Bran	
Lecithin (Non GMO Soy)	1800 mg †
Enzyme Blend	200 mg †
Bromelain Extract (80 GDU Per Gram)	
Papain, Protease, Amylase, Lipase, Cellulase, Lactase	
Probiotics (Dairy Free)	200 mg †
L. Acidophilus, B. Longum, L. Casei, L. Rhamnosus.	
Sprouted Barley	200 mg †
(Certified Organic)	
ResveraMax™ Blend-Proprietary	100 mg †
Polygonum Cuspidatum Extract (25% trans-Resveratrol), Acerola Cherry Powder (Certified Organic), Concord Grape Powder	
Green Tea Extract (Decaffeinated)	100 mg †
(60% Polyphenols)	
Quercetin (98% Dihydrate)	100 mg †
Milk Thistle Seed Extract	75 mg †
(80% Silymarin)	
Red Beet Root (Certified Organic)	50 mg †
Cinnamon Powder (Certified Organic)	50 mg †
Aloe Leaf Powder	50 mg †
(Certified Organic)	
Turmeric Rhizome Extract	20 mg †
(85% Curcuminoids)	
Atlantic Kelp Powder	15 mg †
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Licorice Root Extract	5 mg †
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