

We often hear the term “superfoods” in the media. From a nutritional perspective, the term is a misnomer as all food is super. But the term is becoming more widely used to describe some foods which are rich in a variety of antioxidants, vitamins and minerals which are good for our health. Rather than debating if we should use the term or not, let’s look at the health benefits of 5 foods to show how super they can be. In no particular order, some great foods to include as a regular part of your diet are:

1. Blue berries: The most antioxidant-rich fruit available, blueberries are great for boosting your immune system and preventing infections. They also contain compounds that aid in reducing LDL, or “bad cholesterol”, and their vitamin and mineral content (A, B, C, E, selenium, zinc, and phosphorus) can also help with vision and brain health
2. Nuts, particularly almonds, have a variety of health benefits. They are high in protein, calcium, fibre magnesium, and iron. They are a great muscle building food that also helps in maintaining bone density. Almonds are one of the highest fibre nuts which is great for bowel health and reducing cholesterol. Published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the research found that eating just a handful of nuts a day—any kind of nuts!—decreased people’s risk of dying from any cause by 20 percent over the course of 30 years (1).
3. Salmon: It is an excellent source of high-quality protein, vitamins and minerals (including potassium, selenium and vitamin B12) but it is their content of omega-3 fatty acids that receives the most attention. Salmon is full of omega-3-fatty acids, which research can reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease, contribute to healthy brain function, joints and general wellbeing.
4. Green leafy vegetables (GLV’s) (e.g. spinach, broccoli, kale, bok choy etc): GLV’s are chock-full of antioxidants, fibre, calcium, iron, Vitamin K, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Vitamin B6, Vitamin E, Vitamin B1, Vitamin B3, copper, manganese, omega-3 fats, phosphorus, protein, folate, carotenoids, flavonoids, oxalates and isothiocyanates, These vitamins and minerals give us lot of energy with very few calories and can help protect from diseases like cancer. Try to incorporate a GLV into each main meal.
5. Yoghurt: Recent studies from Australia and Canada show about ½ people not at the recommended 2-3 serves of dairy/day. Yoghurt is made from milk and containing thousands of bacteria, it is chock full of goodness. Yoghurt contains protein for muscle growth and repair, calcium for bone health and bacteria which aids in digestion and good bowel health. Some studies also suggest the probiotics in yoghurt can also help protect from infection (2).

The Australian Dietary Guidelines recommend we should eat a wide variety of nutritious foods (3). People should look for a super diet rather than any one individual super food. My five favourites above come from different core foods groups and are great examples of foods we should be trying to eat most days. A balanced diet with a variety of different foods gives us energy and the best chance of preventing disease. Bon appetite!!!

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References:

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