

Ghee and 7 other "bad" foods that are actually good for health

The experts shed light on foods that have a bad reputation but are secretly full of nutrients that can benefit your heart health, brain function and more.

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Coffee



PHOTOGRAPH: 123rf.com

If you don't have any adrenal or blood sugar issues, coffee can be beneficial for your health. "Coffee has been shown to improve mood and memory, as well as boost your metabolism and endurance," says Pooja Vig, founder of The Nutrition Clinic.

Jaclyn Reutens, a dietician at Aptima Nutrition & Sports Consultants, says that coffee also contains flavonoids, which are associated with lower rates of heart disease and Type 2 diabetes. She recommends drinking no more than two cups a day, since it does contain caffeine, a known stimulant.

Pooja suggests drinking coffee after a meal rather than first thing in the morning, and to select good-quality coffee: "Enjoying a cup as part of your breakfast is fine; it's a problem if you need it to get your day started or to get through the morning. Quality is very important, so I don't recommend you drink three-in-one packet mixes or fancy frappuccinos, as these tend to be loaded with sugar and fat.

"Coffee is best drunk black and plain, or perhaps with a splash of nut milk or coconut milk, if you wish. For a more filling beverage, add some coconut oil."

Egg yolks



PHOTOGRAPH: 123rf.com

Jaclyn says that egg yolks are a great source of vitamin A and lutein, nutrients that are essential to eye health and that help reduce the risk of age-related macular degeneration. Yolks also contain choline, which is important for brain health and, according to some studies, cognitive function later in life.

Egg yolks have a bad reputation because they were once thought to raise blood cholesterol levels. But Pooja says that recent studies show that this is not the case for most people. Consuming up to one egg yolk a day is perfectly fine, Jaclyn adds.

Long-grain white rice



PHOTOGRAPH: 123rf.com

"White rice is generally not as nutritious as brown rice, but long-grain white rice is a healthy option," says Jaclyn. "It has a medium Glycaemic Index, which means that it gives you a sustained release of energy. Plus, it's fortified with B vitamins, zinc and iron." A reasonable serving of long-grain white rice is 150g to 200g per meal. This is equivalent to three-quarters to a full Chinese rice bowl.

Red meat**PHOTOGRAPH: 123rf.com**

Small amounts of lean, high-quality red meat can benefit your health, says Pooja. Meats like beef and lamb contain high levels of micronutrients, including B vitamins, omega-3 fatty acids, iron and zinc. Red meat is also known to relieve anxiety and help boost one's mood.

If you mostly stick to poultry, you should increase your intake of red meat. Pooja adds that, while poultry is high in niacin and vitamin B6, it doesn't have the same nutritional profile as meat.



PHOTOGRAPH: 123rf.com

Much like butter, ghee has a bad reputation due to its saturated fat content, but Pooja says that research has shown the benefits of ghee for heart health. "Ghee is loaded with vitamins A, D, E and K, as well as fatty acids like CLA (conjugated linoleic acid) and butyric acid, which have a host of advantages, from digestive healing to weight management," she explains.

Butter



PHOTOGRAPH: 123rf.com

Don't believe the negative news surrounding butter. If you go with a good-quality brand, and preferably one made from the milk of grass-fed cows, it can be a healthy addition to your diet.

Butter is far superior to margarine, which contains harmful trans-fats, says Pooja. It also chock-full of fatty acids and fat-soluble vitamins, especially vitamin K2, which helps protect your arteries from dangerous calcium build-up. Calcium build-up indicates the calcification of plaque, which results in hardening that can lead to heart attacks.

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Pasta



PHOTOGRAPH: 123rf.com

On its own, pasta is actually healthy. Jaclyn says that this food has a low Glycaemic Index and is virtually fat free. It only becomes "bad" for you when you top it with fattening cream-based sauces. "To make pasta healthier, add lower-fat sauces, like the tomato-based bolognese or arrabiata, instead of carbonara or alfredo, which are high in calories," Jaclyn advises.

Portion control is also important, so eat no more than one to one-and-a-half cups per meal. For extra fibre, choose wholemeal pasta varieties.

Peanut butter



PHOTOGRAPH: 123rf.com

Peanut butter is a good source of protein, magnesium, folic acid and niacin. "These nutrients play an important role in metabolic and muscle function, and the human body needs them in small quantities," says Jaclyn.

But keep in mind that peanut butter counts as a protein and is high in calories so don't go overboard with it. Jaclyn suggests no more than two tablespoons of peanut butter per serving.

Source: <http://www.herworldplus.com/solutions/solutions/ghee-bad-foods-are-actually-good-health-butter-meat-coffee-diet?slide=1>