

March 2023

Live Well, Work Well



Increasing Your Nutrient Absorption With Food Pairings

March is recognized as National Nutrition Month, making it a great time to evaluate the food and beverages you're putting into your body.

Some nutrients can't be optimally absorbed if you eat them on their own; instead, they need to be paired with other nutrients for your body to get the most value out of them. Fortunately, that's as simple as eating certain

immune system healthy. Such fats are a great way to dress up leafy greens and get essential nutrients.

An infographic on a green background. It features icons of a medicine bottle, two pills, and a white cross, with a curved arrow pointing from the pills towards the cross. Below the icons, the text reads: "Poor nutrition is a substantial contributor to chronic diseases—with only smoking ranking higher—according to research by the Institute for Health and Metrics Evaluation."/>

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food combinations together.

Food Combinations to Try

Nutritionists recommend the following common food pairings to support adequate nutrient absorption:

- **Beans and rice**—Beans are packed with protein and fibre, which can balance out starches such as rice. When eaten together, they can help prevent spikes in your blood sugar and deter energy crashes later in the day.
- **Leafy greens and healthy fats**—Healthy fats (e.g., avocado, olive oil and salmon) can increase the absorption of carotenoids in plants. These nutrients help keep your eyes, skin and

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- **Spinach and citrus fruits**—Heme iron comes from animal-based proteins, and non-heme iron is found in plant-based foods. Vitamin C can aid your body in absorbing non-heme iron, protecting against inflammation and chronic diseases. For ideal absorption, pair spinach with citrus fruits or other foods containing vitamin C.
- **Citrus fruits and green tea**—Green tea is rich in epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG), which is associated with increased metabolism and reduced inflammation. When paired with citrus fruits, such as orange or lemon, your body can better absorb EGCG. Drinking tea alone and between meals is also recommended to maximize the amount of EGCG you absorb.
- **Fish and broccoli**—Vitamin D and calcium are good for your bones, but they're even more beneficial when paired together. Consider plating calcium-rich broccoli with fish high in vitamin D, such as salmon or tuna.

Since your ability to absorb nutrients can decrease as you age, it's important to consult your doctor or a nutritionist regarding any specific dietary questions or concerns.

Keeping Your Kidneys Healthy

According to the Kidney Foundation, approximately 2 million Canadians have chronic kidney disease or are at risk, but many don't even know it. Since March is National Kidney Month, it's the perfect time to take charge of your health to lower your chances of developing kidney disease. Your kidneys filter your blood to remove waste and extra water to create urine. They also make vital hormones that produce red blood cells, promote bone health and regulate your blood pressure.

Your kidneys play a vital role in your body. Since they work hard for you, taking good care of them is essential. Consider the following tips:

- Get screened regularly for kidney damage or disease.
- Reduce over-the-counter drug usage, especially ibuprofen.
- Exercise regularly to lower your blood pressure.
- Eat a healthy diet and monitor your weight.
- Drink plenty of fluids to flush sodium and toxins from your kidneys.

Since most people won't have symptoms unless their kidneys fail, it's crucial to know the risk factors of kidney disease. Review the infographic below to learn about risk factors and contact your doctor for more information.



Are You Drinking Enough Water?

To prevent dehydration, you need to consume plenty of water each day. Dehydration can increase your risk of certain illnesses and cause various health problems, such as fatigue and muscle weakness. Men should get about 3 litres (12 cups) of water each day, and women need about 2.2 litres (9 cups). Remember that the water content of the foods you eat counts as well. Make water your beverage of choice, and consider these simple tips to help achieve your daily intake:

- Drink a glass of water with each meal and between each meal.
- Hydrate before, during and after exercise.
- Carry a reusable water bottle with you for easy access during the day.
- Choose sparkling water instead of alcoholic drinks or soft drinks.

Consult your doctor for more guidance on preventing dehydration.

Chicken Noodle Soup

Makes: 6 servings

Ingredients

6 boneless chicken thighs (approximately 565g)
2 l (8 cups) water
2 sprigs fresh parsley
1 onion, chopped
1 carrot, chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
250 ml (1 cup) whole-grain egg noodles
250 ml (1 cup) frozen peas
60 ml (¼ cup) grated Parmesan
30 ml (2 tbsp) fresh basil, chopped
Hot sauce (optional)

Preparations

1. In a suitable soup pot, bring the water, parsley, onion, carrot, garlic and chicken thighs to a boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer and cook the mixture for approximately 15 minutes. Meanwhile, spoon off any foam that forms on the top of the mixture.
2. Ensure the internal temperature of the chicken thighs has reached 74 C (165 F) with a digital thermometer. If not, continue to simmer the mixture until this temperature is achieved.
3. Remove the chicken thighs from the pot using tongs and place them onto a clean cutting board. Once they are slightly cooled, cut the chicken thighs into bite-size pieces.
4. Return the chicken pieces to the pot and add the noodles, peas, Parmesan and basil. Cook the mixture for five minutes, or until the noodles become tender.
5. Serve the finished soup in bowls. Add a dash of hot sauce to each bowl if desired. Eat while warm.

Source: Canada's Food Guide