

SUPERFOODS

What the heck are they?

The term was coined originally in 1915. Its definition in the Oxford English Dictionary read “a food considered especially nutritious or

otherwise beneficial to health and well-being.” The definition today, in the same dictionary, hasn’t changed much. It reads, “a nutrient-rich food considered to be especially beneficial for health and well being.” Other definitions describe superfoods as “nutrient-rich powerhouses that pack large doses of antioxidants, polyphenols, vitamins and minerals...eating them may reduce the risk of chronic disease and prolong life, and people who eat more of them are healthier and thinner than those who don’t.” – www.health.com

Although the term has been abused as a misleading marketing tool to lure shoppers, and there is no standard definition agreed upon by doctors, dieticians and nutritionists, the term has a few basic points that are widely accepted. Superfoods are natural, minimally processed foods that are exceptionally high in nutrients (nutritionally dense), phytochemicals and antioxidants, that offer great health benefits from comparatively small amounts of food. In other words, the nutrient to calorie ratio of these foods is very high; eating them gives you a very high level of micronutrients with very few calories (blueberries are a good example).

Many of the most powerful superfoods are from the rainforests and mountains of Central and South America and not so easy to find at the local supermarket. There are, however, plenty of superfoods that are easily available and won’t bust your budget. Check your local health food store or online sources for the more exotic items, including the acai berry (freeze-dried powder, juice and frozen pulp packs); algae – blue-green like Spirulina and chlorella (powder or tablets); cacao (beans, nibs, powder; camu-camu berries (organic freeze-dried powder); chia seeds (black or white whole seeds or sprouted chia powder); golden berries and goji berries (dried or fresh frozen); hemp seed; maca root powder; maqui berries; sacha inchi nuts; sea buckthorn; sea vegetables and yacon, a sweetener (dried slices or syrup). Superstar foods more easily available include North American native berries (fresh or frozen – but try to buy organic as berries absorb lots of pesticides); flaxseed (pre-ground whole brown, golden or sprouted flaxseed powder); dark green leafy vegetables (kale, spinach, etc); grasses like wheat grass and barley grass; mulberries; pomegranates, quinoa and sprouts.

NATURAL FOODS Organic foods are natural, but natural foods are not necessarily organic. Legally, food labeled “natural” does not contain any artificial ingredients, coloring ingredients or chemical preservatives, and in the case of meat and poultry, is minimally processed. Meat from animals treated with artificial hormones can be (and is) labeled “natural”, as is meat injected with saline solution (this adds considerable weight to a product sold by the pound). Many foods that are not the healthiest choices can be called natural; READ LABELS to make the healthiest choices!

ORGANIC FOODS are foods that have been produced and processed without the use of commercial chemicals such as fertilizers, pesticides or synthetic substances that enhance color or flavor. Organic food must meet legally regulated production standards in order to use the term organic. – **Moseby’s Medical Dictionary, 8th Edition © 2009, Elsevier**

CLEAN FOOD is a term used to describe naturally (organically) grown, minimally processed and preferably locally grown food. The more a food is processed, the fewer natural nutrients remain present in that food.

“Superfoods” Everyone Needs☆☆☆

Experts say dozens of easy-to-find 'superfoods' can help ward off heart disease, cancer, cholesterol, and more.

By Susan Seliger
WebMD Feature
Reviewed by Charlotte E. Grayson Mathis, MD

Imagine a superfood -- not a drug -- powerful enough to help you lower your cholesterol, reduce your risk of heart disease and cancer, and, for an added bonus, put you in a better mood. Did we mention that there are no side effects? You'd surely stock up on a lifetime supply. Guess what? These life-altering superfoods are available right now in your local supermarket.

"The effect that diet can have on how you feel today and in the future is astounding," says nutritionist Elizabeth Somer, author of *Nutrition for a Healthy Pregnancy, Food & Mood*, and *The Essential Guide to Vitamins and Minerals*.

"Even people who are healthy can make a few tweaks and the impact will be amazing," Somer says. "I'd say that 50% to 70% of suffering could be eliminated by what people eat and how they move: heart disease, diabetes, cancer, hypertension can all be impacted."

You don't need specific foods for specific ailments. A healthy diet incorporating a variety of the following superfoods will help you maintain your weight, fight disease, and live longer. One thing they all have in common: "Every superfood is going to be a 'real' (unprocessed) food," Somer points out. "You don't find fortified potato chips in the superfood category."

TOP SUPERFOODS OFFERING SUPER HEALTH PROTECTION

- BEANS
- BLUEBERRIES
- BROCCOLI
- OATS
- ORANGES
- PUMPKIN
- SALMON
- SOY
- SPINACH
- TEA (GREEN OR BLACK)
- TOMATOES
- TURKEY
- WALNUTS
- YOGURT

BLUEBERRIES -- ANTIOXIDANT SUPERFOOD

Packed with antioxidants and phytoflavonoids, these berries are also high in potassium and vitamin C, making them the top choice of doctors and nutritionists. Not only can they lower your risk of heart disease and cancer, they are also anti-inflammatory.

"Inflammation is a key driver of all chronic diseases, so blueberries have a host of benefits," says Ann Kulze, MD, of Charleston, S.C., author of *Dr. Ann's 10-Step Diet, A Simple Plan for Permanent Weight Loss & Lifelong Vitality*. When selecting berries, note that the darker they are, the more antioxidants they have. "I tell everyone to have a serving (about ½ cup) every day," Dr. Kulze says. "Frozen are just as good as fresh." Be sure to include lots of other fruits and vegetables in your diet as well. Remember too that, in general, the more color they have, the more antioxidants.

OMEGA 3-RICH FISH -- SUPERFOODS FOR THE HEART, JOINTS, AND MEMORY

"We know that the omega 3s you get in fish lower heart disease risk, help arthritis, and may possibly help with memory loss and Alzheimer's," Somer says. "There is some evidence to show that it reduces depression as well."

Omega-3s are most prevalent in fatty, cold-water fish: Look for wild (not farmed) salmon, herring, sardines, and mackerel. Aim for two-to-three servings a week. Other forms of omega 3s are available in fortified eggs, flax seed, and walnuts. These superfoods have the added benefit of being high in monounsaturated fats, which can lower cholesterol.

SOY -- SUPERFOOD TO LOWER CHOLESTEROL

A study reported in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*(2003) showed that a diet of soy fiber, protein from oats and barley, almonds, and margarine from plant sterols lowered cholesterol as much as statins, the most widely prescribed cholesterol medicine. "Look for tofu, soy milk, or edamame -- not soy powder," says Somer. In other words, soy sauce won't do the trick. One caveat: If you have a family history of breast cancer it is not recommended that you eat extra soy.

FIBER -- SUPERFOOD AIDS WEIGHT LOSS AND CHECKS CHOLESTEROL

A diet high in fiber will help you maintain healthy cholesterol and blood sugar levels. As a bonus, because fiber helps you feel full longer, it's a great tool in weight management. Whole grains, beans, fruit, and vegetables are all good sources. Try throwing some beans in your salad, recommends Kulze. "Fresh, frozen, or dried are the best. You can use canned, but they tend to be higher in sodium," Kulze warns.

TEA -- SUPERFOOD FOR LOWERING CHOLESTEROL AND INHIBITING CANCER

"The overall antioxidant power of black tea is the same as green tea," says Kulze, "but green tea does have ECGC, a powerful antioxidant that we really do think is quite special." A recent Japanese study on green tea found that men who drank green tea regularly had lower cholesterol than those who didn't. Researchers in Spain and the United Kingdom have also shown that ECGC can inhibit the growth of cancer cells. For a double health whammy, replace sugary sodas with tea.

CALCIUM

OK, OK, you know the drill: Calcium helps build strong bones and prevents osteoporosis. Look for it in dairy products or supplements. Added bonus: Some studies show that calcium helps with weight loss. Here are the calcium levels recommended for adults by the USDA:

- Age 9 to 18 -- 1,300 mg
- Age 19 to 50 -- 1,000 mg
- Age 51 and over -- 1,200 mg

AND FINALLY, THE YUMMIEST SUPERFOOD YET ... DARK CHOCOLATE

New research has shown that dark chocolate is packed with antioxidants and can lower blood pressure. Kulze recommends that you look for chocolate with 60% or higher cocoa content; the darker, the better. In addition, the darker it is, the lower the fat and sugar content. Now that's our kind of health food!

Published February 2007.

Dr. Perricone's 10 Superfoods You Should Add to Your Diet Today ~ The Latest on Superfoods

- 4 easy-to-find superfoods that won't break the bank
- 25 superfoods to incorporate into your diet
- 4 exotic superfood grains

Of course, there are more than just 10 "superfoods." In fact, just about every brightly colored fruit and vegetable fits the category of a superfood, as do nuts, beans, seeds and aromatic and brightly colored herbs and spices. The beneficial properties of each one of these superfoods could fill an entire book.

The 10 featured here were chosen because of their direct link to the Brain-Beauty Connection. These foods (listed here in alphabetical order) are rich in either Essential Fatty Acids (EFAs), antioxidants or fiber, and as in the case of açai—all three!

In addition, we have included foods that have been proven to lower or help regulate blood sugar levels—an extremely important factor for all of those concerned with slowing the aging process and preventing diabetes, obesity, wrinkles and a host of degenerative diseases.

HEALTH BENEFITS - Although many of these foods have reported medical benefits, remember at all times that if you have any type of health problem or physical symptom, ***do not self-diagnose or self-medicate***—even if with a food or herb. Trust your medical professional first and foremost in this department. However, the 10 foods included here do have incredible health benefits. Listed below are just some of the reasons to include these foods in your diet—every day:

- **Prevent or reduce inflammation**
- **Help regulate metabolism and burn body fat**
- **Lower total cholesterol**
- **Lower blood pressure**
- **Help protect against heart disease**
- **Help protect against cancer**
- **Help protect organs from toxins**
- **Promote digestive health**

Nicholas Perricone, MD, FACN, is a board-certified clinical and research dermatologist. Dr. Perricone completed medical school in just three years, graduating with distinction. He completed his internship in Pediatrics at Yale Medical School and his Dermatology Residency at Ford Medical Center. Dr. Perricone is regarded as the Father of the Inflammation Theory of Aging. He is Adjunct Professor of Medicine at Michigan State University's College of Human Medicine. He is certified by the American Board of Dermatology, is a Fellow of the New York Academy of Sciences, a Fellow of the American College of Nutrition and a Fellow of the American Academy of Dermatology and the Society of Investigative Dermatology.

Dr. Perricone is the recipient of the Eli Whitney Award for his significant contributions to science, invention, and technology. Dr. Perricone is also the recipient of the American College for Advancement in Medicine (ACAM) 2000 Norman E Clark, Sr. Lecture Award for his, "dedication and contributions towards advancing Complementary and Alternative Medicine." He holds dozens of U.S. and international patents for the treatment of skin and systemic disease, and for the use of topical anti-inflammatories for reversing and preventing damage to skin caused by factors such as age, the sun, the environment, and hormonal changes.

Read more: <http://www.oprah.com/health/Dr-Nicholas-Perricone-Biography#ixzz2OJ27R2LF>

Dr. Perricone's No. 1 Superfood: Açai

Nature's Energy Fruit



It may seem odd to start this list of superfoods with one you've likely never even heard of, but studies have shown that this little berry is one of the most nutritious and powerful foods in the world! Açai (ah-sigh-ee) is the high-energy berry of a special Amazon palm tree.

Harvested in the rainforests of Brazil, açai tastes like a vibrant blend of berries and chocolate. Hidden within its royal purple pigment is the magic that makes it nature's perfect energy fruit. Açai is packed **full of antioxidants, amino acids and essential fatty acids**. Although açai may not be available in your local supermarket, you can find it in several health food and gourmet stores (often in juice form). A new product featuring the unsweetened pulp is now also available, and I highly recommend that you choose this form of açai.

Açai pulp contains:

- A remarkable concentration of antioxidants that help combat premature aging, with 10 times more antioxidants than red grapes and 10 to 30 times the anthocyanins of red wine.
- A synergy of monounsaturated (healthy) fats, dietary fiber and phytosterols to help promote cardiovascular and digestive health.
- An almost perfect essential amino acid complex in conjunction with valuable trace minerals, vital to proper muscle contraction and regeneration.

The fatty acid content in açai resembles that of olive oil, and is rich in monounsaturated oleic acid. Oleic acid is important for a number of reasons. It helps omega-3 fish oils penetrate the cell membrane; together they help make cell membranes more supple. By keeping the cell membrane supple, all hormones, neurotransmitter and insulin receptors function more efficiently. This is particularly important because high insulin levels create an inflammatory state, and we know, inflammation causes aging.

Dr. Perricone's No. 2 Superfood: The Allium Family - Onions, Garlic, Chives, Leeks, Shallots and Scallions

If açai is the most exotic food on this list, the allium family of foods is perhaps the most humble. Garlic, onions, leeks and chives contain flavonoids that stimulate the production of glutathione (the tripeptide that is the liver's most potent antioxidant). Glutathione enhances elimination of toxins and carcinogens, putting **the allium family of vegetables at the top of the list for foods that can help prevent cancer**. Here are just a few benefits from members of this family:

GARLIC

- Lowers total cholesterol (but raises HDL—"good"—cholesterol)
- Lessens the risk of atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries)
- Lowers blood pressure
- Reduces the risk of blood clots (cause of the majority of strokes and heart attacks)
- Destroys infection-causing viruses and bacteria
- Reduces the risk of certain cancers, in particular, stomach cancers
- Produces more "natural killer" cells in the blood to fight tumors and infections
- Helps fight against neurological diseases such as Alzheimer's
- Enhances detoxification by reducing toxins

For optimum effect, eat garlic raw. Cooking can destroy some of the allicin compound, which is the active constituent.

Onions

- Inhibit the growth of cancerous cells
- Increase in HDL cholesterol (especially when eaten raw)
- Reduce total cholesterol levels
- Increase blood-clot dissolving activity
- Help prevent colds
- Stimulate the immune system
- Reduce the risks of diabetes
- Have antibacterial and antifungal properties
- Reduce the risk of certain cancers
- Help relieve stomach upset and other gastrointestinal disorders

Onions contain two powerful antioxidants, sulphur and quercetin—both help neutralize the free radicals in the body and protect the membranes of the body's cells from damage.

Leeks - Leeks have all of the healthy properties of the Allium family as described above.

However leeks also contain these nutrients:

- Vitamin B6
- Vitamin C
- Folate
- Manganese
- Iron
- Fiber

This particular combination of nutrients makes leeks particularly helpful in stabilizing blood sugar, since they not only slow the absorption of sugars from the intestinal tract, but help ensure that they are properly metabolized in the body... We all know that onions and garlic are important for imparting delicious flavor to a meal. However, when we include leeks, we raise the flavor of the meal from delicious to "sublime." They are particularly delicious with fish such as halibut, chicken and fish and chicken soups.

Dr. Perricone's No. 3 Superfood: Barley - This ancient grain is sadly overlooked by today's culinary trendsetters, yet it is one of the grains with the greatest health benefits, delightful flavor and versatility. Barley can be used as a delicious breakfast cereal, in soups and stews and as a rice substitute for dishes such as risotto. Not only is barley a **low-glycemic grain**, it is **high in both soluble and insoluble fiber**. Soluble fiber helps the body metabolize fats, cholesterol and carbohydrates, and lowers blood cholesterol levels.

Insoluble fiber—commonly called "roughage"—**promotes a healthy digestive tract and**

reduces the risk of cancers affecting it (e.g., colon cancer). Dietary fiber is critical to health—yet few people in our modern society even come close to the recommended daily intake. Many experts believe that good health begins in the colon, and without sufficient dietary fiber in the diet, we run the risk of a host of diseases, ranging from hemorrhoids to colon cancer. The fiber found in barley provides food for the beneficial bacteria in the large intestine. This is important as the "good" bacteria can crowd out the disease-causing bacteria in the intestinal tract, resulting in greater health and disease resistance.

... hulled barley, in which the outer hull (the bran) is left intact, is richer in fiber and contains more fiber and nutrients than other forms, such as pearl barley or Scotch barley.

EATING HULLED BARLEY ON A REGULAR BASIS:

- Lowers blood cholesterol levels
- Protects against cancer because its high fiber content helps speed food through the digestive tract, and because its a good source of selenium, shown to significantly reduce the risk of colon cancer
- Is a good source of niacin, the B vitamin that is cardio-protective
- Slows starch digestion, which may help keep blood sugar levels stable
- Provides high concentrations of tocotrienols, the "super" form of vitamin E
- Provides lignans, phytochemicals that function as antioxidants. Women who consume lignans (also present in high levels in flaxseed) are less likely to develop breast cancer.

Dr. Perricone's No. 4 Superfood: Beans & Lentils - There are good reasons that beans occupy two places on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Guide Pyramid: the first is with high-protein foods such as meat, eggs, poultry and fish, and the second is with vitamin-rich vegetables. The beneficial phytochemicals found in beans offer other preventive health attributes not reflected in the USDA's Pyramid. The multi-faceted nutrition and prevention powers of beans—a category that encompasses common beans (e.g., kidney, black, navy, pinto), chickpeas (garbanzo beans), soybeans, dried peas and lentils—make them an anti-aging dietary necessity. **Beans are low in fat** (except for soybeans), calories and sodium but high **in complex carbohydrates and dietary fiber**, and they offer modest amounts of essential fatty acids—mostly omega-6s (only soybeans have significant amounts of omega-3 fatty acids). They are also an **excellent source of protein**, needing only to be combined with grains such as barley or oats to provide all the amino acids necessary to make a complete protein for vegetarians who do not have other sources of protein for their meals. Beans are extremely beneficial in an anti-diabetes diet because **they rank low on the glycemic scale**, which means that they do not cause the inflammatory, hunger-inducing spike in blood sugar levels associated with refined grains and baked goods... I recommend no more than 1/4 to 1/2 cup cooked beans per meal. Dried beans and lentils are a staple of many cuisines worldwide. For thousands of years, beans and lentils have been and continue to be one of the most nutritious foods available. In addition, beans and lentils are

extremely versatile. They can be combined with fragrant herbs and vegetables and made into delicious soups. They can be used in salads or puréed and served as a dip or spread. Chickpeas and lentils can also be ground into a high-protein, low-glycemic flour.

Dr. Perricone's No. 5 Superfood: Buckwheat - Seed, Grain and Health Powerhouse

Though it is usually thought of as a grain, buckwheat is actually the seed of a broadleaf plant related to rhubarb. While it is not a true grain, it is used like one in cooking, and it surpasses rice, wheat and corn on almost every measure of healthfulness (including the fact that rice, wheat, and corn are high on the glycemic scale, thus provoking a quick spike in blood sugar levels, a proven promoter of systemic inflammation). Buckwheat, on the other hand, ranks **low on the glycemic scale**.

Hulled buckwheat kernels (called groats) are pale tan-to-green, while the roasted buckwheat groats known as kasha—a staple food in Eastern Europe—are dark brown with a nutty flavor. Kasha is often steamed in a stock with onions, olive oil and fresh parsley, and you can combine equal parts plain buckwheat groats and oats, and cook the mix to enjoy as a hot breakfast cereal topped with berries. Buckwheat has been cultivated for at least 1,000 years in China, Korea and Japan, where it is often enjoyed in the form of buckwheat "soba" noodles—a form that's become increasingly popular in the West as a healthy substitute for wheat pasta. Buckwheat **has more protein than rice, wheat, millet or corn** and is **high in the essential amino acids lysine and arginine**, in which major cereal crops are deficient. Its unique amino acid profile gives buckwheat the power to boost the protein value of beans and cereal grains eaten the same day. Yet, buckwheat **contains no gluten**—the source of protein in true grains—and is therefore safe for people with gluten allergy or celiac disease.

Buckwheat Protein's Unique Health-Promoting Properties:

- The specific characteristics of buckwheat proteins, and the relative proportions of its amino acids, make buckwheat the unsurpassed cholesterol-lowering food studied to date.
- Its protein characteristics also enhance buckwheat's ability to reduce and stabilize blood sugar levels following meals—a key factor in preventing diabetes and obesity.
- Like the widely prescribed "ACE" hypertension drugs, buckwheat proteins reduce the activity of angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE), thereby reducing hypertension.

Dr. Perricone's No. 6 Superfood: Barley Grass, Wheat Grass & Other Green Foods -- Plant Power in Small Packages

When we talk about "green foods," we're referring to a group of foods that includes young cereal grasses like barley grass and wheatgrass, as well a blue-green algae known as BGA. Nutritionally, they are close cousins to dark green leafy vegetables, but offer far greater levels of "nutrient density." In other words, **an ounce of these concentrated green foods contains much more of the beneficial phytonutrients found in an ounce of green vegetables.** The results of many experimental studies show that green foods have **marked beneficial effects on cholesterol, blood pressure, immune response and cancer prevention.** These effects are attributed in part to their high concentrations of chlorophyll. Chlorophyll, the phytochemical that gives leaves, plants and algae their green hues, is the plant equivalent of the oxygen-carrying red pigment hemoglobin in red blood cells. **Dietary chlorophyll inhibits disease bacteria and exerts therapeutic effects on bad breath and internal odors.**

Wheat and Barley Grasses - Young cereal grasses—especially wheat and barley grass—are distinguished by their brilliant emerald green hues. Before World War II, drug stores throughout the country, but especially in the grain-belt states of the Midwest, sold tablets of dried wheat or barley grass as a kind of primitive vitamin supplement. Today, young wheat and barley grasses are dried and powdered to make dietary supplements, or picked fresh to process in juicing machines. At the early grass stage of their growth, wheat and barley are closer to vegetables than grains in composition. This is important to note because while I strongly discourage eating wheat and wheat products, I believe wheatgrass is an excellent addition to your diet....There is very little nutritional difference between wheat grass and barley grass, although it is important to note that **barley grass acts as a free radical scavenger that also reduces inflammation and pain, and wheat grass contains P4D1, a "gluco-protein" that acts like an antioxidant, reducing inflammation. It is also thought to be able to help the body attack cancer cells.** You can get cereal grasses in powder or tablet form. Dried cereal grasses are certainly easier to handle than fresh, which must be juiced. However, fresh grass juice contains healthful enzymes not found in dried grass powder and is likely to be higher in just about every phytonutrient found in cereal grass. Many juice bars and health-oriented markets offer these juices on their menus.

Dr. Perricone's No. 7 Superfood: Hot Peppers

The term "peppers" encompasses a diverse group of plants, ranging from the popular sweet green or red bell pepper to the fiery hot haba ero or the even more lethal Scotch bonnet...The native peoples of the Americas had been growing and enjoying sweet and chili peppers for an estimated 7,000 years. Soon after Columbus's ships brought them back to Spain, traders spread them around the world, transforming cuisines—and people's

preventive health prospects—from Morocco to Hungary, and India to China.

Peppers—whether sweet bell or hot chili—are members of the plant genus "capsicum" (cap-sih-kum)...All peppers contain compounds called capsaicinoids. This is especially true of **chili peppers**, which derive their spicy heat—as well as **extraordinary anti-inflammatory, analgesic, anti-cancer, heart-healthy effects**—from very high levels of capsaicinoids, the most common form of which is capsaicin. In addition to capsaicin, chilies are **high in antioxidant carotenes and flavonoids**, and contain about **twice the amount of vitamin C found in citrus fruits**. Almost any dish—from homemade soups, stews and chili to stir-fries, salads and salsas—can benefit from small amounts of hot peppers.

Dr. Perricone's No. 8 Superfood: Nuts & Seeds – If you want to **dramatically decrease your risk of cancer, heart disease and diabetes, control your weight** with no hunger pangs and **reduce the visible signs of aging like wrinkles and sagging skin**, I recommend that you "go nuts." Here's how: When thoughts turn to food between meals, enjoy a handful of raw, unsalted nuts. They're extremely filling and satisfying—and healthful. Add some nuts to regular meals—a tablespoon of chopped almonds on your oatmeal, a tablespoon of walnuts in your lunchtime salad or a hazelnut-encrusted grilled salmon fillet. Nuts are so versatile they can take the place of flour and breadcrumbs—with a lot more flavor and health benefits. Just remember, as with all things, to use moderation.

Dr. Perricone's No. 9 Superfood: Sprouts - Sprouts are a highly nutritious food. Grown locally year-round, sprouts are a **good source of protein and vitamin C**. A sprout is produced when a seed starts growing into a vegetable. Sprouts can grow from the seeds of vegetables, grains, legumes, buckwheat and beans. Sprouts vary in texture and taste. Some are spicy (radish and onion sprouts), some are hardy and often used in Asian cuisines (mung bean), while others are more delicate (alfalfa) and add texture and moistness to salads and sandwiches. **Why Sprouts?** - There are a great many reasons to eat sprouts. As we age, our body's ability to produce enzymes declines. **Sprouts are a concentrated source of the living enzymes and "life force" that is lost when foods are cooked** or not picked fresh from your own garden. Additionally, due to their high enzyme content, sprouts are also **much easier to digest than the seed or bean from which they came**. All nutrients necessary for life are contained in seeds—a food category that includes grain kernels, beans, legumes and nuts. Because sprouts are so fresh and do not sit for days or weeks in warehouses, we know that we are getting optimum nutrition.

Great Ways to Serve Sprouts

- Add to tossed salads
- Use in coleslaw (cabbage, clover, radish)
- Try in wraps and roll-ups (alfalfa, sunflower, radish)
- Stir-fry with other vegetables (alfalfa, clover, radish, mung bean, lentil)
- Blend with vegetable juices (cabbage, mung bean, lentil)

- Mix with soft cheeses, tofu, yogurt or kefir for a dip (mung bean, radish)
- Stir into soups or stews when serving (mung bean, lentil)
- Eat them fresh and uncooked in a sprout salad (salad mixes)
- Top omelet or scrambled eggs (alfalfa, clover, radish)
- Combine in oat, barley or buckwheat dishes (fenugreek, lentil, mung bean)
- Add to sushi (radish, sunflower)
- Sauté with onions (mung bean, clover, radish)

Dr. Perricone's No. 10 Superfood: Yogurt and Kefir -"Probiotic" Partners in Health - The origin of fermented foods and cultured milk products goes so far back that it is rumored to predate recorded history. This is perfectly in keeping with my philosophy that the most ancient foods have survived for a reason—they continue to be instrumental to the survival of our species. Fermented and cultured foods may well represent our first experience with what researchers now call "functional" foods—foods that actively promote optimal health. The fermented foods scientists consider "probiotic" are primarily yogurt and kefir.

What Are Probiotics and What Do They Do? - Early in the 20th century, research by Nobel Prize-winning biologist Dr. Elie Metchnikoff led him to propose the "intoxication theory" of disease. Metchnikoff believed that aging was accelerated by toxins secreted by unfriendly bacteria that putrefy and ferment food in the intestines... Metchnikoff recommended consuming "cultured" foods, such as yogurt, that contain healthful bacteria. His ideas spread rapidly, and in short order, both yogurt and the concept underlying probiotics garnered world attention. And because Metchnikoff identified lactic acid-secreting bacteria as among the most beneficial, these so-called lactobacilli became an early focus of popular efforts to put Metchnikoff's hypothesis into practice. Today, probiotic microbes are routinely fed to livestock, and it is widely accepted that various lactobacillus and bifidobacteria species hold great promise for enhancing human health. In humans, probiotic microbes help the body's ongoing fight against infectious diseases by competing with the pathogens for food, nutrients and survival. This is why human breast milk is rich in nutritional factors that foster the growth of bifidobacteria—a beneficial bacterial family that keeps babies' intestinal ecosystems healthy and disease-resistant...

PROBIOTICS:

- Ameliorate vaginal (bacterial and yeast), urinary tract and bladder infections
- Ameliorate inflammatory intestinal disorders, including inflammatory bowel disease (IBD)
- Ameliorate food allergies and inflammatory, allergic conditions like asthma and eczema
- Reduce several risk factors for cardiovascular disease
- Reduce several risk factors for intestinal cancers

- Reduce the duration of gastroenteritis and rotavirus-induced diarrhea in infants
- Reduce the rate of childhood respiratory infections
- Ameliorate microbe-induced traveler's diarrhea
- Help prevent tooth decay

Probiotics, Inflammation and Immune Function

Researchers have found that people whose diet is rich in probiotics foods enjoy **enhanced immune function**. It appears that probiotics normalize immune responses, inhibit chronic subclinical inflammation and may improve inflammatory conditions with an autoimmune component, such as asthma, eczema and Crohn's disease...Many doctors recommend live yogurt for patients on antibiotics to replenish good bacteria and some argue that yogurt live cultures may also reduce the occurrence of colds, allergies and hay fever.

Yogurt vs. Obesity - A daily dose of yogurt is good for people of all ages. Yogurt is also important for those wanting to lose weight. As a milk product, yogurt is naturally rich in calcium. Research shows that calcium helps reduce weight gain. Even small changes in the calcium levels of fat cells can change signals within the cell that control the making and burning of fat...Always buy organic yogurt and avoid yogurt that contains thickeners and stabilizers. Also avoid yogurt that contains added sugars or sweetened fruit, as these upset the delicate chemical balance that allow the cultures to thrive. Sugars also feed the growth on unwanted yeasts, such as *Candida albicans*...

Kefir (kee-fer) is a fermented, probiotic milk drink from the Caucasus Mountains in the former Soviet Union. The name kefir loosely translated means "pleasure" or "good feeling." Due to its health-promoting properties, kefir was once considered a gift from the gods. Fortunately it is being rediscovered and recognized for its many health and beauty benefits. Kefir can best be described as a sort of liquid, sparkling yogurt, with its own distinct and deliciously mild, naturally sweet, yet tangy flavor—with a refreshing hint of natural carbonation... Unlike yogurt, which is created from milk by adding certain lactic acid bacteria, kefir is made by combining milk with a pinch of "kefir grains"—the folk term coined to describe a complex mixture of yeasts and lactobacillus bacteria. The small amount of carbon dioxide, alcohol and aromatic compounds produced by the cultures give kefir its distinct fizzy, tangy taste. Kefir also contains unique polysaccharides (long chain sugars) called kefiran, which may be responsible for some of its health benefits. Much of the Russian research on its health benefits remains untranslated, and Western research is in its early stages—but the results to date support kefir's impressive folk reputation...