

WELLSPRING

seasoned

OCTOBER 2021 / CHESHVAN 5782 / ISSUE 69

A TOAST TO
OPEN TOASTS

THE PERFECT
EVERYDAY
SOUP

ON THE MENU TONIGHT:
**SWEET N' SPICY
PEPPER CHICKEN**

POWER DOSE

6 foods and drinks to fuel your body and bring you closer to your health goals

By Esti Asher, MS, RDN, LD

The aftereffects from the abundance of food throughout Yom Tov—in addition to the spirit of the fresh start of a new year—motivate many to change up their eating behaviors.

Below is a list of seven food and drink categories to help fuel your body optimally and lead you closer to your health goals. While this list may seem obvious at first glance, I encourage you to read through and internalize each point to help you feel empowered and more confident with your food choices.



Water

Know your water preferences so you can successfully reach your hydration goals. Do you prefer water that is cold or room temperature? Carbonated or still? Flavored or unflavored? Do you prefer drinking from a cup or water bottle? With a straw or without a straw? Taking your personal water preferences into account will help you set yourself up to drink an adequate amount of water and gain from its plethora of health benefits.



Vegetables



Whole grains

For some reason, grains as a food group often get a bad rap; it's common for people to be afraid of and restrict carbohydrates, but this is based on misinformation. Of course, different carbohydrates have different nutritional values, but there is a time and a place for all foods, especially whole grains. Carbohydrates provide energy, and making the habit to reach for a whole grain option instead of a refined sugary fix means you're on track toward success. Try cooking brown rice and quinoa to have them easily accessible throughout the week, and consider having whole wheat bread and whole grain/high fiber crackers and cereals on hand as well.



Fruit

If someone tells you fruit is not recommended due to its sugar content, or because it's a carbohydrate, I'd caution you to think again before following the advice of that individual. Besides for being packed with many vitamins, minerals, and nutrients, fruits are delicious, incredibly satisfying, refreshing, and pleasing to the eye. I recommend washing fruits before putting them away so they are easy to take and eat, even in a pinch.

Similar to fruit, I recommend washing vegetables right after you bring them home from the supermarket or produce store. Washing (and better yet, cutting up) vegetables in advance will make them more available and appealing for you and the family to enjoy and benefit from. Furthermore, many (if not all) of us enjoy eating large volumes of food but don't love the feeling of being uncomfortable after a meal. Filling up on vegetables allows us to eat large quantities, while also feeling light and satisfied rather than weighed down and sluggish.



Lean proteins

I recommend including protein in meals (always) and snacks (if possible) in order to help you feel satisfied. Stocking up wisely with readily available protein options is often what differentiates those who successfully achieve and maintain their goals from those who struggle to maintain success in the long term. Consider which protein options sound delicious to you, and then stock your fridge or pantry with them for quick and easy access. Ideas include Greek yogurt, string cheese, cans of tuna, packets of smoked (or fresh) salmon, hard-boiled eggs, hummus, and premade chicken (either prepared in advance by you or rotisserie-style purchased in a store).



Tea

Sometimes we get the “munchies” (particularly at night) and feel hungry; other times we’re really just craving comfort and something to do. Keeping a supply of tea choices to enjoy may keep your tastebuds happy and your body cozy. Whether you prefer minty, fruity, spicy, or flowery teas, the tea aisle is full of options that can be enjoyed by all. Some of my personal favorites include vanilla chai (which is often dairy), “limonana,” and chamomile.



Food Enhancements

Whether it’s a dressing to drizzle, nuts or seeds to sprinkle, dipping sauce to dunk into, or garnish to decorate with, it’s important to remember that eating should be pleasurable for all the senses—even if health and/or weight loss are on our radar. Eating should not feel like a chore, bland, boring, or stressful. Think of ways to make your meals and snacks more enjoyable and positive. After all, eating in a way that promotes health and self-care is in fact something to celebrate.

A Handful of Walnuts a Day May Keep Heart Disease Away

While it is already known that omega-3 fatty acids are helpful at preventing heart disease, a recent study has discovered a new benefit walnuts have to offer. In a research study published by *Circulation*, a journal of the American Heart Association, researchers found that walnuts not only lowered overall cardiovascular disease risk by decreasing LDL (bad) cholesterol, but they also had an effect on the structure of the LDL cholesterol molecules by improving the quality of the LDL particles themselves.

These benefits were seen among older adults who ate a handful (approximately half a cup) of walnuts each day for two years. The study was a parallel-group randomized control trial that included test groups in both California, USA, and Barcelona, Spain. It included a total of over 600 participants.

Reducing Sugar May Prevent Millions of Disease Events

In addition to encouraging the imposition of a sugar tax and clearer nutrition labeling, a team of researchers have taken sugar reduction a step further by attempting to simulate and quantify the health and economic outcomes of reducing 20 percent of sugar from packaged foods and 40 percent of sugar from beverages. Implementing proposed sugar reductions may lead to an estimated reduction of 2.48 million cardiovascular disease events (for example, strokes, heart attacks, and cardiac arrests), in addition to the prevention of 490,000 cardiovascular deaths and 750,000 diabetes cases in the United States. The research team also estimated that this sugar reduction may result in billions of dollars in savings for net healthcare costs.

The study was published by *Circulation* and included research teams from Massachusetts General Hospital, the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, and New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. The sugar reduction policy was proposed by the US National Salt and Sugar Reduction Initiative (NSSRI). While government support and other logistics are needed to move forward with the proposal, their findings remind us that although sugar may be consumed in moderation, having an excess may not be so sweet after all. ♥

Esti Asher, MS, RDN, LD, is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist and Self-Care Enthusiast on a mission to help women reach their ultimate health and wellbeing potential inside and out. She shares credible, clear, and inspiring nutrition information with women via her virtual private practice. To contact Esti with feedback or inquiries regarding her nutritional services, please email her at: esti@estiashernutrition.com or visit estiashernutrition.com.