

Healing Foods for Healing Bodies

By Annie Lehner, Dietetic Intern and Betty Garrity, MPH, RD | June 20, 2012

Whether you are recovering from a hospital visit or feeling ill at home, everyday foods found in grocery stores can aid our recovery. The body's natural response to illness is inflammation. Common foods to help calm inflammation include flaxseeds, walnuts, berries, mushrooms, salmon, spinach, turmeric, ginger, green tea, and yogurt. This list is simply a taste of delicious foods available containing unique nutrients to heal our bodies.



Special substances contained in foods are the real contributors to healing and fighting inflammation.

Individual properties of berries, spinach, and mushrooms include antioxidants (vitamin C), phytochemicals, and fiber. Yogurt, although not normally viewed as a healing food, contains probiotics which aids digestion and prevent illness. The flaxseeds, walnuts, and salmon contain healthy fats providing antioxidants (Vitamin E and selenium) and anti-inflammatory Omega-3 fatty acids. Spices such as turmeric and ginger are produced from tropical plants and trees and contain antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, as well. Last, but not least, green tea, along with black, white, and oolong tea, contain antioxidants called polyphenols which defend our bodies against diseases and promote healing.

Many fruits, vegetables, and nuts can be eaten raw, mixed in yogurt or salads, or cooked. Steaming is best to maintain nutrient content. These foods may be added to entrées such as chicken, kabobs, or salmon. Salmon may be cooked in a variety of ways, including baking and grilling. Flaxseeds should be ground prior to consumption by using a coffee grinder. Try sprinkling ground flaxseeds on cereal or yogurt. They may also be added to breads, muffins, or cookies while mixing the dough. Turmeric is used largely in Indian cooking. It is best when added at the beginning of cooking. An easy use for ginger is to slice it and simply add it to hot water or hot tea.

Reaping the benefits of healing foods can be as easy as munching on nuts in the car, grabbing a handful of berries at a party, or drinking hot tea on a chilly evening.

The following links provide additional recipes and information on healing foods.

- → [Healthy Eating Program: UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center](#) ↗
 - → [Healthy Flax Seed Recipes](#) ↗
 - → [Flax Seed Smoothie Recipe](#) ↗
 - → [Healthy Ginger Recipes](#) ↗
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