

WOMEN'S HEALTH WEEK 2020

NUTRITIONAL HEALTH

POWERHOUSE NUTRIENTS AND FOODS FOR WOMEN

For optimal health and performance, it's critical for women to prioritise our health and nutrition needs. It's common to feel too busy to take the time to put ourselves first, but this can result in our health taking a serious hit. It doesn't have to be tricky – making some simple adjustments to our diets and being aware of our unique needs can make a big impact and help empower us to reach our healthiest potential.



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Important Health Conditions that women need to focus on:

Gut Health

A healthy gut plays a very important role not only for our digestive health but also for effective immunity and mental health. 70% of our immune system lies in the gut, and the 'happy chemicals', serotonin and dopamine, are also produced in the gut! Eating adequate fibre, fermented foods, and leafy green vegetables all contribute to a happy, healthy gut. As a bonus, foods rich in fibre can also help to protect against bowel cancer (www.canceraustralia.gov.au).

Heart Health

Heart disease represents 1 in 5 deaths in Australia and is the leading cause of death in women (www.heartfoundation.org.au). A healthy diet and regular exercise are recommended for heart health. Focus on eating healthy, unsaturated fats, which are found in foods such as salmon, avocado, and nuts. If you have a family history of heart disease or high cholesterol, be sure to get a health check annually at your GP.

Bone Density

As women age, the risk of osteoporosis increases. Osteoporosis is common in older women, affecting 1 in 4 over the age of 75 years (www.aihw.gov.au – 2017-18). A diet rich in calcium, magnesium and vitamin D can help reduce this risk. (www.osteoporosis.org.au). In addition, incorporation of weight bearing exercise has been shown to further reduce the risk of osteoporosis.

Mental Health

A nutritious, balanced diet coupled with regular exercise can help to improve mood. Studies have shown that in some instances, exercise can be as effective as anti-depressant medications (*Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 2019)*.

Strength, Stamina, and Energy

A diet rich in healthy proteins can help provide our muscles with adequate nutrition to aid strength and recovery. Additionally, proteins coupled with complex carbohydrates - such as wholegrain bread or brown rice - can help supply our bodies with sustainable, slow releasing energy for the day.

Cognition

Eating a well-balanced diet with fresh produce and minimal alcohol, processed foods, and sugar can help to reduce the risk of diseases such as Type 2 diabetes and Alzheimer's (www.healthdirect.gov.au).

*<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6335323/g>

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Important nutrients needed to nourish women's health:

Iron

Fibre

Protein

Calcium

Zinc

B Vitamins

Omega 3

Antioxidants

Magnesium

TOP TEN POWERHOUSE FOODS FOR WOMEN:

There is an abundance of healthy foods out there that are beneficial for women's health, but the following foods are a great top 10 and can be easily incorporated into a daily diet to address common health concerns in women.

SALMON: Full of omega 3 fats. Great protein source. Mood boosting. Needed for healthy skin and hair.

GREEN LEAFY VEGETABLES: Contains folate, iron, and vitamin K. Should be eaten in abundance for a healthy digestive and immune system.

EGGS: A powerhouse food packed full of nutrition. A wonderful breakfast or snack addition. Full of protein, choline, zinc, omega 3 fats + B vitamins.

BERRIES: Full of antioxidants to help reduce the risk of cancer and chronic disease. Contain fibre for heart health.

NUTS: Raw nuts are the perfect snack! Full of fibre, protein, and good fats. Walnuts are a great source of omega 3. Brazil nuts are rich in the antioxidant selenium.

DARK CHOCOLATE: Yes, chocolate! Aim for at least 70% cacao. Rich in antioxidants to protect against oxidative damage from internal and external stressors.

AVOCADOS: Healthy mono-saturated fats. Can contribute to heart health and healthy skin.

WHOLEGRAINS: B vitamins and magnesium for energy and happy moods. Fibre for a health gut. Wholegrain carbohydrates help us avoid blood sugar spikes throughout the day.

LEGUMES: Contain B vitamins, magnesium, and fibre. Great protein option! Can aid gut health.

OATS: Contains fibre and B vitamins. Can help reduce LDL (harmful) cholesterol. Important for heart health and blood sugar management.

Salmon, lentil salad & flat bread

Recipe serves: 2



Lentil Salad

Salad Ingredients

- 1 can tinned lentils, drained
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 cucumber, diced
- ½ small red onion, finely diced
- 1 cup baby spinach
- 45g feta, crumbed
- 2 tablespoons coriander, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons parsley, finely chopped

Dressing Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- Half clove of garlic, minced
- Salt
- Pepper

Instructions

1. In a small mixing bowl, combine lemon juice, olive oil, Dijon mustard and garlic. Whisk well until all ingredients are combined. Add salt and pepper to taste
2. Place lentils, cherry tomatoes, cucumber, red onion, spinach, coriander, parsley and feta into a large mixing bowl
3. Pour dressing into salad, toss and mix well

*Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 5 minutes*

Salmon, lentil salad & flat bread

Greek Yoghurt Flat Bread

Ingredients

- ½ cup Greek yoghurt
- 1 cup plain flour

Instructions

1. Place Greek yoghurt and plain flour into a bowl. Mix well until a smooth dough is formed
2. Place dough in refrigerator for 10 minutes
3. Flour work surface and divide the dough into 4 equal parts
4. Roll out dough to approximately ½ cm in thickness
5. Heat a non-stick pan on medium heat. No oil or butter needed
6. Add one flat bread to the dry pan. Cook for about 1 minute until the bottom browns and bubbles appear
7. Flip the flat bread over and cook for a further minute or until brown
8. Repeat with remaining flat breads

Prep time: 15 minutes
Cook time: 10 minutes

Pan Fried Salmon

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 2 salmon fillets
- Salt
- Pepper

Instructions

1. Take salmon fillets out of the fridge and rest for 10 minutes at room temperature before cooking
2. Heat oil in a large non-stick pan at medium to high heat
3. Season salmon with salt and pepper
4. Place salmon skin side down on pan and cook for 4 minutes or until golden brown
5. Reduce the heat to medium and use a spatula to carefully turn the fillet over. Cook for an additional 3 minutes
6. Remove the salmon from the pan and transfer to plate

Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 7 minutes

Minted Berry Smoothie



Ingredients:

- 300ml water or coconut water
- 1c frozen berries
- A few chopped mint leaves
- 1c spinach leaves
- ½ cooked/ soft beetroot
- 1 tblsp honey

Method:

1. Place all ingredients into a high-speed blender
2. Blend till a thick consistency is formed
3. Serves 2
4. Can be stored in sealed jars/ bottles for a few days in fridge

Green Goodness Smoothie



Ingredients:

- 1.5 cups filtered water or coconut water
- 2c spinach leaves
- 1 tblsp chia seeds
- 1 tblsp nut butter
- 1 banana
- 1/3c chopped pineapple
- 1/4 avocado

Method:

1. Place all ingredients into a high-speed blender
2. Blend till a thick consistency is formed
3. Serves 2
4. Can be stored in sealed jars/ bottles for a few days in fridge