

What are Functional Foods?

By Cara Rosenbloom, RD

Many foods serve the function of providing us with calories, satisfying our appetite and tasting good. Foods that contain a high amount of beneficial nutrients that confer health benefits or help prevent disease earn the specific moniker **functional foods**.

These special foods have benefits that go beyond their basic calories and protein. They are often high in a specific vitamin or mineral, or they supply fiber, probiotics, antioxidants or healthy fats. Functional foods can be natural — for example, salmon naturally contains heart-healthy omega-3 fats — or can be created by a food manufacturer, such as orange juice fortified with vitamin D.

The term functional foods originated in Japan in the 1980s, created by government agencies to highlight foods that had exceptional health benefits. The FDA regulates health claims that can be made for foods that have functional health benefits. For example, a container of milk may say “calcium builds strong bones,” and fruit and vegetable packages can claim these items may reduce the risk of some types of cancer (due to vitamins A and C and fiber).

Some examples of functional foods are:

- Berries, rich in fiber, vitamins and antioxidants.
- Leafy greens, rich in vitamins A, C, K and calcium.
- Nuts and seeds, rich in vitamin E, fiber and healthy fats.
- Legumes, rich in fiber and iron.
- Fatty fish, rich in vitamin D and omega-3 fats.
- Fortified dairy foods or plant-based alternatives, rich in probiotics, calcium and vitamin D.
- Fortified cereals, rich in an array of vitamins and minerals.

Eating functional foods can help ensure we get enough nutrients in the diet, may help prevent nutrient deficiencies, and may protect against nutrition-related diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cancer and heart disease.

Noteworthy Medical Myths

Getting a flu shot can give you the flu.

Fact: Flu vaccines are either made with inactive flu virus or no virus at all. They are recommended for adults and children. Speaking of viral illnesses, the old cliché *starve a fever, feed a cold* is baloney.

Men are more likely to get heart disease than women.

Fact: The CDC reports that almost as many women die from heart disease as men. And, just like for men, heart disease is the leading cause of death for women.

Eating close to bedtime causes weight gain.

Fact: What's best is to avoid eating ultra-processed food and overeating each day.

Eating carrots helps you see in the dark. Fact: While carrots are good for eyesight, they aren't that good. The vitamin A in carrots helps you see in low light but won't give you superhero night vision.

No pain, no gain. Fact: Exercise need not hurt to be effective. When starting a new workout regime, you may experience some temporary normal muscle soreness.

Reading in dim light damages vision. Fact: There is no scientific evidence that reading in the dark does any long-term harm to your eyes, according to the Cleveland Clinic Cole Eye Institute.

Eggs cause unhealthy cholesterol. Fact: Eggs contain some dietary cholesterol, but this does not translate into blood cholesterol. Studies show an egg a day is okay for heart health.

Note: Online health advice varies in quality. The resources we recommend include:

National Institutes of Health: [nih.gov](https://www.nih.gov)

MedlinePlus: [medlineplus.gov](https://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

Food and Drug Administration: [fda.gov](https://www.fda.gov)

American Heart Association: [heart.org](https://www.heart.org)

American Cancer Society: [cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org)



Don't fall for the lure of a base tan this summer.

Any tan is a sign of skin damage. Base tans are hyped for building melanin (a substance in your body that makes pigmentation) in the skin through short sessions in the sun or a tanning bed to prevent sunburn outdoors. This isn't only a false claim, it's a potentially hazardous one. According to the National Cancer Institute, a base tan offers no protection from sunburn. However, it does promote wrinkles and increases the risk of skin cancer. For a sun-kissed look, spray on a fake bronze sunless tan. Protect your skin by limiting time in the sun, using water-resistant sunscreens with an SPF of 30 or higher and UVA and UVB protection and avoiding tanning beds.



QuikRisk™ Assessment: Do you have a healthy relationship with social media?

By Eric Endlich, PhD

Social media can be entertaining and help connect you with faraway friends and family. However, excessive use may be mentally harmful. How many of the following statements apply to you?

- T F 1. My social media use interferes with important responsibilities (e.g., work, school or family).
- T F 2. I feel an urge to spend more time on social media.
- T F 3. I've been unable to cut down on my social media use.
- T F 4. I get upset when I don't have access to social media.
- T F 5. My social media use has caused friction in my relationships.
- T F 6. I prefer being on social media even when I'm around friends or family.
- T F 7. Social media is my escape from problems or stress.
- T F 8. I feel compelled to check social media multiple times a day.
- T F 9. Since spending more time on social media, I've been more lonely, anxious or depressed.
- T F 10. I enjoy social media but am uncomfortable with in-person interactions.

If you marked True for four or more of these statements, consider consulting a mental health professional or refocusing part of your spare time on in-person relationships, self-care and other interests. Regularly taking breaks from social media help, too.

Note: This self-assessment is not a substitute for professional evaluation or treatment.



Q: Mental health self-care tips?

A: For many conditions, including eating disorders, addictions, anxiety and depression, it is important to seek professional treatment, such as psychotherapy and medication. In addition to therapy, trying these winning strategies can help you cope with everyday stress or to stay mentally healthy:

- **Exercise:** A sense of well-being is one of many benefits.
- **Nutrition:** Healthy food nourishes the brain as well as the body.
- **Rest:** Recharging can build your resilience.
- **Meditation:** Start by simply paying attention to your breathing for a few minutes.
- **Gratitude:** Let people know they've made a difference; you'll both feel better.
- **Positivity:** Pay attention to what's going well in your life and the world.
- **Goal-setting:** Having something to strive toward gives life meaning.
- **Human contact:** A hug, a phone call or a visit — any of these can brighten your day.
- **Boundary-setting:** Knowing when to say **no** helps you avoid getting overwhelmed.

— Eric Endlich, PhD



Save a Life with CPR

CPR and AED
Awareness Week
is June 1 to 7.



Every year, more than 350,000 Americans who are not hospitalized experience sudden cardiac arrest. A person experiencing cardiac arrest may seem fine until they collapse, and they die within minutes unless they receive cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), or their heart is shocked back into a normal rhythm with an automated external defibrillator (AED).

CPR isn't complicated, but you need to know the basics. Note: The instructions below are for situations when an AED isn't available. If someone is unconscious, call 911 or ask another bystander to do it. Don't assume someone will call unprompted.

- First, check to see if the person is breathing, has a heartbeat and is responsive. If they are not, begin CPR. If the person can breathe and/or respond, do not use CPR. Follow instructions from the 911 operator until emergency responders arrive.
- Even if you aren't trained in CPR, you can still perform chest compressions until EMTs arrive. This is hands-only CPR. Place one of your hands in the center of the person's chest with your other hand on top. Interlock your fingers, lock your elbows and start pushing down hard at about a rate of 100 compressions per minute (use the beat of the Bee Gee's song "Stayin' Alive").
- Don't attempt mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Only medical providers and others trained in the technique should administer it, according to the American Heart Association.

Remember: Don't hesitate to perform CPR for fear of hurting the person. Good Samaritan laws nationwide protect you from legal action if you give CPR or other emergency aid.



Note: Due to production lead time, this issue may not reflect the current COVID-19 situation in some or all regions of the U.S. For the most up-to-date information, visit [coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov).

The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **Getting Forgetful?**, is at personalbest.com/extras/23V6tools.

