

HEALTHY LIVING

*Feel-Good Things
to do this September*

No. 1

EAT APPLES, HELP YOUR HEART

A recent Florida State University study found that women who ate apples every day for a year had a 23 percent drop in LDL (bad) cholesterol and even shed about three pounds. Since September is the beginning of apple-picking season, getting your daily fill is easy. *Pickyourrown.org* lists orchards nationwide. Make the most of your bushel with the *Dial-A-Slice apple slicer* (\$20, chefscatalogue.com). It creates slices in two sizes: thick for snacking and thin for baking.

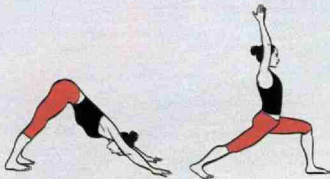


No. 2 LOOSEN UP

The psoas, a group of muscles that runs from the lower back to the top of the thigh, is one of the largest and most used in the body, so it's also one of the tightest. Tight psoas can tug on the spine and, over time, lead to lower-back pain. Try this pose from Los Angeles yoga instructor Kathryn Budig to keep psoas supple.

CRESCENT POSE

From downward-facing dog, step left foot between hands; stay on ball of back foot. Keep a slight bend in back leg while lifting torso upright and extending arms overhead. (The stretch in your right hip is working the psoas.) Hold for eight counts. Switch sides.



No. 3 REDEFINE EASY LISTENING

Instead of the usual iPod ear buds, invest in earphones that fit snugly in your ear canal. They block external noise so you won't have to crank up the sound, says Calleen Le Prell, associate professor in the Department of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences at the University of Florida. Try **Etymotic 6i Isolator Earphones** (\$99, etymotic.com), which have tips in many sizes (some small enough for kids).

No. 4 STAVE OFF SICKNESS UNDER YOUR OWN ROOF

The secret to staying well this season is safeguarding your home from cold and flu viruses and infection-causing bacteria. "You may not be able to avoid germs in the outside world, but you can cut down on how many make their way into your home and spread from one family member to another," says Joshua Riff, an emergency-medicine specialist and the medical director of Target Corporation.

WASH HANDS FREQUENTLY

Viruses spread through droplets, such as from a sneeze, onto hands and then to other objects; washing up prevents the spread of germs from one room to the next. In a pinch, use an alcohol-free hand sanitizer, such as **Clean Well**.

TOSS OUT TOOTHBRUSHES

If you had a bacterial infection such as strep throat, replace your toothbrush once you're on the mend. Bacteria may linger on a toothbrush's moist bristles even after you've recovered, upping the odds that you'll get sick again.

DISINFECT DAILY

Wipe down surfaces that get a lot of traffic, such as doorknobs, telephones, TV remotes, and the refrigerator door, with an all-purpose cleaner. **Martha Stewart Clean All-Purpose Cleaner** is free of harsh chemicals.

AVOID SHARING UTENSILS AND GLASSES

"Encourage your family to place them in the dishwasher as soon as they're done to prevent another person from using them," Riff says. Even if someone feels well, he or she could carry and spread germs for several days before getting sick.

No. 5 DELETE LOW FAT FROM YOUR VOCABULARY

According to researchers at the Harvard University School of Public Health, low-fat diets aren't the gateway to good health. In fact, they can do more harm than good, since low-fat foods are often high in sugar and sodium (to make up for the lack of flavor) and can increase your risk of heart disease and diabetes. So instead of trying to eliminate fat from your diet, focus on eating foods that are rich in healthy fats, which are just as flavorful (plus, you can eat more of them).

TRANS FATS

These man-made fats are created through a process called hydrogenation, which makes vegetable oils more stable and less likely to spoil. That's why you'll find them in packaged foods such as cookies, crackers, and pastries. They're also used for deep-frying foods because they can be reheated repeatedly. **Steer clear:** Research shows they raise your risk for heart disease, stroke, and diabetes.

DAILY ALLOWANCE:
NONE

SATURATED FATS

These kinds of fat come mainly from meat, seafood, poultry with skin, and whole-milk dairy products (cheese, milk, and ice cream) and raise levels of harmful LDL cholesterol, increasing the risk of heart disease and stroke. You don't have to eliminate them from your diet entirely (meat and dairy can be good sources of protein), but it's a good idea to keep your intake as low as possible.

DAILY ALLOWANCE:
15 GRAMS OR FEWER

6 OZ. GROUND BEEF
(ABOUT THE SIZE OF A HAMBURGER PATTY)



½ OZ. (HALF A SLICE)
OF CHEDDAR CHEESE



UNSATURATED FATS

There are two types of unsaturated fats: monounsaturated and polyunsaturated. Don't get too hung up on which is which. Both are called good fats because they improve blood cholesterol levels and fight inflammation, lowering your risk of heart disease. They are found primarily in plant foods. Omega-3 fatty acids, however, are most prevalent in fish. Called essential fats, omega-3s are an important type of polyunsaturated fat that your body can't make, so they must come from food.

DAILY ALLOWANCE:
ABOUT 62 GRAMS

1 AVOCADO



1 TBSP.
OLIVE OIL



1 OZ. (22 PIECES)
ROASTED ALMONDS



½ CUP
PUMPKIN SEEDS



1 OZ. (10 HALVES)
WALNUTS



5 OZ. SALMON
(ABOUT 2 DECKS
OF CARDS)



1 TBSP.
GROUND FLAXSEEDS



No. 6 STOCK YOUR PANTRY FOR BETTER NUTRITION

We asked registered dietitians Mary Ryan in Seattle and Tara Gidus in Orlando for tips on what to look for on food labels. Then our test kitchen picked their favorite brands.

1. NUT BUTTERS

LOOK FOR Natural versions, which have no added sugar and no hydrogenated oil, the source of unhealthy trans fats.

OUR PICK Arrowhead Mills Crunchy Organic Peanut Butter is made purely of peanuts, so you don't have to worry about unhealthy additives.

2. CEREAL

LOOK FOR At least three grams of fiber and no more than 10 grams of sugar (less is even better). And pay attention to serving size—it's likely smaller than what's going in the bowl.

OUR PICKS Food for Life's Ezekiel 4:9 cereal has small, crunchy nuggets that won't get soggy in milk. Barbara's Puffins are a kid-friendly option.

3. CRACKERS

LOOK FOR Key words such as whole grain or whole wheat at the top of the ingredients list and at least three grams of fiber.

OUR PICK Mary's Gone Crackers are thin, crisp, and gluten-free.

4. PASTA AND RICE

LOOK FOR The words 100 percent whole grain on the label for whole-wheat pasta, and three grams of fiber per serving. For rice, choose any whole-grain variety (such as brown, wild, red, or brown basmati), which will be higher in fiber and nutrients than its more processed white cousin.

OUR PICKS Lundberg Organic Rice is grown sustainably and has a variety of choices. DeLallo pasta is firm, not chewy, so it tastes like regular pasta.

5. OIL

LOOK FOR Extra-virgin, cold-pressed olive oil, which is high in heart-healthy monounsaturated fats and contains disease-fighting antioxidants.

OUR PICK Badia a Coltibuono is a good all-purpose oil. It can be used for cooking and to dress a salad.

6. NUTS AND DRIED FRUIT

LOOK FOR Roasted, unsalted nuts for snacking. Almonds are the highest in vitamin E, and walnuts boast omega-3s. All dried fruit is a good source of fiber and potassium, but cranberries and blueberries are the antioxidant superstars. Look for those with no added sugar.

OUR PICKS Bazzini nuts are fresh and flavorful. Trader Joe's is a reliable source for dried fruit.

7. SALT AND SPICES

LOOK FOR Sea salt, which is more flavorful than table salt, so you'll use less of it and still get great flavor. Limit your intake to 2,300 milligrams of sodium per day (about one teaspoon). Use any spices to add flavor, not calories. Plus, spices increase satiety, so you'll be less likely to overeat.

OUR PICKS Maldon Sea Salt Flakes have large crystals, which add a little crunch. Le Saunier de Camargue Fleur de Sel has finer crystals and a more delicate flavor. Penzey's spices are the test kitchen's favorite; Spice Islands is a good supermarket option.

8. CANNED TOMATOES

LOOK FOR The shortest list of ingredients on the label and the least amount of added sugar and sodium. All kinds of canned



tomatoes—diced, or in a sauce, or paste—will be good sources of the potent antioxidant lycopene, but tomato paste will have the highest levels because it's the most concentrated.

OUR PICK San Marzano canned tomatoes (imported from Italy) are a bit sweet and have more flesh and fewer seeds than other brands.

9. CANNED TUNA AND SALMON

LOOK FOR Light tuna, which has the lowest amount of potentially harmful mercury. For lower-calorie versions, opt for those packed in water (although tuna in olive oil has a wonderfully rich flavor that will be better in some recipes). Choose canned wild salmon for one of the best sources of omega-3s.

OUR PICKS Ortiz tuna has big chunks of tuna in heart-healthy olive oil. American Tuna is sustainably caught and is packed in its own oils, making it incredibly flavorful.

10. CANNED BEANS

LOOK FOR Low-sodium varieties, since canned beans can be high in salt. As a general rule, more color means more nutrients, so red kidney, pinto, and black beans will all be rich in a variety of antioxidants. But all beans are great (and cheap) sources of protein and fiber.

OUR PICK Eden Organic Beans have no chemical additives and stay whole, so they aren't mushy.

11. CHICKEN BROTH

LOOK FOR Unsalted or low-sodium broths. (Regular stock can have as much as 860 milligrams of salt per cup.) Opt for organic whenever possible.

OUR PICK Kitchen Basics has natural ingredients and no MSG.