

THE
EVERYTHING
HEALTHY
LIVING SERIES

Food Remedies:

Acne

*The most important information
you need to improve your health*



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The Everything® Healthy Living Series
Food Remedies: Acne

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Introduction

For more than 10 years, millions of readers have trusted the bestselling Everything® series for expert advice and important information on health topics ranging from pregnancy and postpartum care to heart health, anxiety, and diabetes. Packed with the most recent, up-to-date data, Everything® health guides help you get the right diagnosis, choose the best doctor, and find the treatment options that work for you.

The Everything® Healthy Living Series books are concise guides, focusing on only the essential information you need. Whether you're looking for an overview of traditional and alternative migraine treatments, advice on starting a heart-healthy lifestyle, or suggestions for finding the right medical team, there's an Everything® Healthy Living book for you.

The Healing Power of Food

The healing power of food has been well documented throughout history. Cultures throughout the world have used foods — fruits, vegetables, herbs, and animal products — to ward off disease and prevent ailments, aches, and pains. Now we live in a time when advances in technology allow us to take a closer look at food and discover why and how it heals. As a consumer, you have the ability to take this valuable knowledge and use it to guide your eating while reaping the benefits of improved health and wellness.

Food as Medicine

Think back to a time when there were no medicines, no pharmaceutical companies, and very little of the hard science you are familiar with today. Having difficulty? That's not surprising, because you have likely not lived during such an era. However, there was a time in history when food was the only medicine.

The history of the healing power of food dates back more than 4,000 years. References regarding food and herbs for healing can be found in the Bible. Greek and Chinese cultures have a long history of utilizing food and its nutrients as cures and relief for ailments and disease. It was the people of these times who saw the effects that food can have on healing the body even if they didn't know exactly why or how it happened.

Many of the reputed benefits of food from the past are now strongly supported by scientific evidence. The well-known Nurses' Health Studies are considered some of the largest and longest-running research studies evaluating factors that influence women's health. Through these studies scientists have learned things such as eating cruciferous and green leafy vegetables can help maintain cognitive function as you age, and the consumption of nuts and whole grains reduces risk for coronary heart disease. Other scientific research has shown that strawberries may contain nutrients that damage or kill leukemia cells, antioxidants have the potential to inhibit enzymes that cause inflammation, and mushrooms have antimicrobial powers to fight off infection.

The Positive Side of Nutrition Research

As time has passed and technology has advanced, nutritional researchers have not forgotten the powers of food. What has changed, however, is that now the tools exist to evaluate exactly what makes food such a healing force. Not only are new powers of foods being discovered, but now the active components of these foods are being identified, giving people the ability to eat well and reduce disease.

For example, growing and eating garlic for its medicinal properties dates back several thousand years. Today's researchers have been able to determine that the sulfur-containing compounds of garlic, as well as its vitamin and mineral content, produce valuable health benefits. Research has linked garlic to a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease and some

cancers, and it carries the potential to reduce the pain and inflammation of arthritis.

Similarly, fruits and vegetables have long been recommended as part of a healthy diet, and for good reason. Not only do they provide fiber linked to gastrointestinal health, but the skin and flesh of these fresh foods contain incredible substances called phytochemicals (plant chemicals) that can reduce disease. It is evident that the color of a fruit or vegetable and its species of plant origin influence exactly what ailment or condition the food will benefit.

Nutrients Versus Real Food

Today, the terms “nutraceutical,” meaning a nutrient-rich food or food component, and “functional food,” describing a food that has nutrients added to it to increase health benefit, are used widely in the food and nutrition industry. As research continues to identify the specific components of foods responsible for health, the drive increases to isolate these nutrients, add them to other commonly eaten, less-nutritious packaged foods (thus making functional foods), and create supplements and pills. This often results in a marketing campaign promising a miracle cure for what ails you.

The problem is that an isolated nutrient is often less effective than a nutrient that comes from real food. There are issues with an isolated nutrient being absorbed after digestion, dangers of toxicity when high doses of a vitamin or mineral are consumed, and risks of unhealthy interactions with high doses of other nutrients. These risks of overconsumption are not often an issue when obtaining nutrients through whole, complex foods. Healthy foods give you a balanced supply of nutrients when you eat a varied diet.

Nutritional science continues to uncover links between nutrients and health, but there seems to be little or no benefit when the nutrient is in the form of a supplement. For example, recent research has linked adequate

vitamin D levels to brain health and reducing risk of dementia. Yet researchers did not find the same outcome in a group that used vitamin D supplements instead of food, and recommended that people increase their intake of food rich in vitamin D rather than add supplements to their diet.

While vitamins and minerals are known to protect against disease, they are best consumed in their natural form — in food. Food is the original source of healing nutrients. So if it is known that vitamins and minerals protect against disease, yet supplements aren't the answer, what is the answer? Food. Food is the original source of healing nutrients.

If you'd like to learn more about food remedies, check out *The Everything® Guide to Food Remedies*, available in print (978-1-4405-1100-4 and eBook (978-1-4405-1157-8) formats.

What Causes Acne?

According to the American Academy of Dermatology, there is no exact cause for acne. However, it is believed that four key factors play a role in its development: excess oil, clogged pores, bacteria, and inflammation. Sebum oil production is meant to prevent skin from drying. During adolescence, though, the production increases and this can lead to clogged pores and inflammation. The results can range from simple whiteheads to severe acne lesions.

A skin condition that often occurs in the teenage and young adult years, acne is difficult to cope with, and to prevent and treat. While a relationship between acne and food is sometimes classified as a myth, many patients do recognize some foods as triggers, and a healthy diet promotes healthy skin.

Fact

The bacteria *Propionibacterium acnes* is a normal part of healthy human skin. This bacteria uses sebum oil for growth, so when sebum oil production increases during adolescence so does the bacteria. Hence the increase in acne with adolescence. People with acne have more *Propionibacterium acnes* in their skin than people without acne.

Many of the traditional food links to acne are considered myths by health professionals. You have likely heard the recommendation to stop eating fried foods or chocolate in order to prevent a breakout. There is no proof that any foods “cause” acne; acne is usually the result of stress, chronic inflammation, and blood sugar problems. There are, however,

some foods that can trigger or aggravate these conditions and can be avoided to prevent worsening the condition. These foods include:

- **High-fat foods.** High-fat foods can cause blood sugar levels to fluctuate severely, thereby leading to more acne.
- **Dairy products.** Dairy products are often high-fat foods, which as mentioned above can cause blood sugar spikes. Milk also contains hormones that can lead to increased sebum oil production by the body.
- **Caffeine.** Caffeine in foods triggers your body to release stress hormones, which increase stress levels.
- **Alcohol.** Drinking alcohol can lead to a release of hormones that trigger sebum oil production.
- **Refined carbohydrates and high-sugar foods.** The sugars in these carbohydrates cause blood sugar spikes.

While there may not be scientific evidence linking a specific food to acne, there are many nutrients and foods that can promote healthy skin.

Nutrients That May Prevent or Alleviate Acne

There are several nutrients that can help alleviate acne including vitamins C and E. Vitamin C helps to support a healthy immune system, which can defend against bacteria and viruses. It also promotes wound healing and repairs tissue. Vitamin E assists in the repair of skin damage. All of these factors may play a role in the development of acne.

Try guavas, red sweet peppers, kiwis, and oranges for vitamin C. If guava is available fresh in your area, experiment with using it in homemade juices. Kiwi makes a convenient, transportable snack when you slice it in half and eat it out of the skin with a spoon.

Essential

Saying that guava is high in vitamin C is an understatement when compared to the orange. Oranges get a lot of attention for vitamin C content; however, guavas have this citrus fruit beat. One cup of guava contains about 375 milligrams of vitamin C compared to just 83 milligrams in the same amount of orange segments.

Vitamin E is found in a variety of seeds and nuts, such as sunflower seeds, almonds, hazelnuts, peanuts, and peanut butter. Avocados, tomatoes, and turnip greens also contain vitamin E. Seeds and nuts are ideal snacks and also great toppers for cereals and salad. Enjoy more greens with your meals by serving roasted chicken breasts or fillets of grilled fish over a bed of sautéed spinach and turnip greens instead of on a bed of rice.

Recipes

Red Bell Pepper Spinach Pasta Salad

A cold pasta salad is a great way to incorporate a few veggies that are rich in vitamin C. This one is dressed simply with olive oil and lemon juice, but feel free to substitute your favorite vinaigrette.

|Serves 4



Ingredients

3 cups dry whole-wheat rigatoni
1 red bell pepper, sliced
3 green onions, sliced
1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
1 cup fresh spinach, chopped
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
3 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper

1. Bring about 5 cups of water to a boil; add the pasta and stir. Cook until tender, but firm. Drain and rinse with cold water. Set aside.
2. In a bowl, combine the bell pepper, onions, tomatoes, and spinach. Stir in the Parmesan cheese. Add the olive oil, lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Stir to coat the vegetables.
3. Add the pasta to the vegetables and toss to coat evenly. Add more salt and pepper to taste. Refrigerate for at least 30 minutes before serving.

Per Serving
Calories: 290

Fat: 13g
Sodium: 395mg
Carbohydrates: 38g
Fiber: 2g
Protein: 10g

Fresh Grated Parmesan

You are likely familiar with grated Parmesan in a can, but have you ever purchased a wedge of fresh Parmesan for cooking? Fresh Parmesan adds much more flavor and is reasonably priced, and a little of it goes a long way. Simply grate it right before using. You will be surprised by the flavor and by just how long one small wedge will last.

Kiwi Orange Salad

*This simple recipe stacks colorful fruit and is drizzled with a sweet glaze.
It can be used as either a sweet starter to a meal or a light dessert.*

Serves 4



Ingredients

2 oranges

2 kiwis

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup orange juice

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh basil leaves, chopped

1. Carefully peel the oranges with a knife. You need to remove both the peel and the white fibrous layer so that the orange flesh is visible. Slice each into 8 slices, discarding the ends. (Save them for a snack for later.)
2. Peel the kiwi fruit and cut each into 4 slices, discarding the ends.
3. Place the orange juice in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce heat slightly and cook for about 7 to 10 minutes, stirring often. Continue to cook until the juice thickens.
4. On 4 plates, arrange the stacked fruit. Begin with 1 slice of orange, then put 2 slices of kiwi side by side on the orange slice. Add another slice of orange and 2 slices of kiwi.
5. Sprinkle on a tablespoon of chopped basil and drizzle with $\frac{1}{4}$ of the orange glaze. Repeat for the other 3 plates. Serve immediately.

Per Serving

Calories: 80

Fat: 0g

Sodium: 2mg
Carbohydrates: 20g
Fiber: 3g
Protein: 2g

Fruit Sauces

Turning juice into a sauce to drizzle over fruit, a salad, or fish is as simple as cooking it to evaporate the water and intensify the flavor. Most juices will reduce by half, so keep in mind how much you need and begin with double that amount. Pomegranate juice, cherry juice, and orange juice make delicious glazes.

Guava Juice

Guava is rich in vitamin C, and if you have access to the fresh fruit, it makes a wonderful juice. The juice will be thick, so add ice and water, and then sweeten to taste with a small amount of raw sugar or honey, or add an orange to the mix.

Serves 1



Ingredients

2 guava fruits

½ cup cold water

2 teaspoons demerara sugar

1. Wash the guavas and cut them into quarters, or into pieces small enough to feed into your electric juicer. Use the plunger to push the pieces through the juicer and collect the juice in a glass at the spout.
2. Stir in cold water and the sugar. Serve immediately. If the pulp and juice separate, stir well before serving.

Per Serving

Calories: 98

Fat: 1g

Sodium: 4mg

Carbohydrates: 22g

Fiber: 6g

Protein: 3g

Roasted Tomato Marinara

It may seem silly to make your own marinara sauce when you can buy it at the store, but the homemade flavor makes it well worthwhile. There is nothing quite like a slow-roasted tomato taste.

Makes 2 cups



Ingredients

8 medium tomatoes

3 tablespoons olive oil

4 cloves garlic

2 teaspoons salt

1 teaspoon black pepper

1 tablespoon muscovado sugar

2 teaspoons dried basil

2 teaspoons dried oregano

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Wash the tomatoes and remove the stems. Cut into quarters and place on a baking sheet.
2. Coat the tomatoes with the olive oil. Add the garlic cloves and stir again. Add more oil if necessary, as the size of tomatoes can vary. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and bake for 35 to 45 minutes or until the tomatoes become shriveled and are cooked through.
3. Transfer the tomatoes and garlic to a blender and purée until smooth. Pour the mixture into a saucepan on medium heat. Add the sugar, basil, and oregano. Simmer, partially covered, stirring occasionally, for 7 to 10 minutes. Taste and add more salt if desired.

Per ½ cup Serving

Calories: 150

Fat: 11g

Sodium: 1177mg

Carbohydrates: 14g

Fiber: 3g

Protein: 3g

Adding Spices

If you prefer, you can add the spices to the tomatoes before roasting. Be sure to have extra on hand, because you may decide that your sauce needs some more flavor once you purée the roasted tomatoes. If you like a spicy marinara, add $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of crushed red pepper when heating the sauce.

Vitamin C Salad

This bright and colorful salad combines some of the best sources for vitamin C. A sprinkle of nuts and seeds adds a little vitamin E. Try topping it with an orange vinaigrette.

Serves 2



Ingredients

1 cup romaine lettuce, chopped
1 cup fresh spinach, chopped
½ red bell pepper, sliced
½ green bell pepper, sliced
1 orange, sliced into segments
1 kiwi, sliced
2 tablespoons almonds, chopped
2 tablespoons sunflower seeds
Salt and pepper, to taste

1. Toss together the lettuce and spinach and divide equally on 2 plates. Top with the sliced bell peppers, followed by the orange segments and kiwi slices.
2. Sprinkle on almonds and sunflower seeds. Add salt and pepper to taste, and top with your favorite vinaigrette before serving.

Per Serving

Calories: 190

Fat: 10g

Sodium: 17mg

Carbohydrates: 24g

Fiber: 7g

Protein: 6g

Other Fruits Rich in Vitamin C

When you need a change, but don't want to miss out on valuable vitamin C, there are plenty of fruit substitutions you can make in this salad recipe. Grapefruit segments, sliced tomatoes, sliced strawberries, and cantaloupe chunks all contain vitamin C, and provide fresh flavor mixed with a little creativity.

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