

THE
EVERYTHING
HEALTHY
LIVING SERIES

Food
Remedies:
Premenstrual
Syndrome

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



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The Everything® Healthy Living Series
**Food Remedies: Premenstrual
Syndrome**

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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 Is Premenstrual Syndrome?

The symptoms of premenstrual syndrome (PMS) and their severity are different for every woman. Research shows that specific nutrients have an influence on these symptoms and relieve the discomfort associated with PMS.

PMS is a group of varied symptoms that occur one to two weeks prior to the start of a woman's menstrual period. Acne, breast tenderness, fatigue, insomnia, bloating, aches and pains, irritability, and anxiety are all symptoms of PMS. For some women, these symptoms are barely noticeable; for others, they are severe and can affect physical performance and mental focus during this time.

Fact

Approximately 85 percent of women experience the symptoms of PMS. These symptoms usually disappear after a few days without significant impact on the woman. However, for about 2 to 3 percent of women, the symptoms can be so severe they can be debilitating.

Symptoms are thought to be caused by changes in hormone levels and brain chemicals. The symptoms may also be worsened by low vitamin and mineral intake, and alcohol and caffeine intake. In addition, excess sodium can cause water retention and bloating.

Nutrients That Alleviate the Symptoms of PMS

Calcium and magnesium have been found to improve mood and decrease the water retention that leads to bloating. Vitamin B6 has been associated with a decrease in the irritability that accompanies PMS in some studies, as well as reduced depression and breast tenderness. Manganese, when combined with calcium, may also reduce irritability, depression, and tension.

Foods That Contain These Nutrients

Calcium intake can be increased with dairy products such as milk and yogurt, but don't forget about dark leafy greens, including kale and broccoli. For magnesium, try cashews, quinoa, amaranth, and peanut butter. Vitamin B6 can be found in chickpeas, wild salmon, chicken, and pistachios. Include pineapple, pecans, and raspberries for more manganese.

Essential

Risk factors for developing PMS include family history, stress, history of depression, increasing age, high caffeine consumption, a sedentary lifestyle, a diet high in sugar, abuse of alcohol, and having multiple children.

Tips for Incorporating These Foods

Before you begin experiencing PMS symptoms, plan your meals, keeping the key nutrients in mind. Salmon served with dark leafy greens or chicken breast with a pineapple salsa and a side of broccoli are great examples. Snack on nutritious pecans, cashews, fresh raspberries, and pistachios.

Recipes

Comfort Yogurt Parfait

This parfait can be enjoyed as a breakfast or even a midday snack. It combines a variety of foods that can help to prevent and relieve the symptoms of PMS.

Serves 1



Ingredients

8 ounces vanilla Greek yogurt
1/4 cup pineapple, diced
1 tablespoon raw cashews, chopped
1 tablespoon raw pistachios
1/4 cup fresh raspberries
1 tablespoon raw pecans, chopped

1. Divide the yogurt into 4 equal portions. In a bowl or a dessert cup, add 1 portion of yogurt. Top it with the pineapple.
2. Next add more yogurt, and top it with the cashews and pistachios. Layer with more yogurt and add the raspberries. Finish with yogurt and top it with the pecans. Serve immediately.

Per Serving

Calories: 305

Fat: 19g

Sodium: 115mg

Carbohydrates: 25g

Fiber: 3g

Protein: 12g

Toasted Chickpeas

When toasted in a hot oven with spices, a simple can of chickpeas becomes a delicious, crunchy snack. This recipe is easy to make and you will have something for munching in about a half hour.

Serves 4



Ingredients

- 1 (12-ounce) can chickpeas
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 425°F. Rinse and drain the chickpeas. Place on a clean kitchen towel and dry well.
2. Transfer the chickpeas to a bowl and add the olive oil. Stir to coat. Add the garlic powder, chili powder, cumin, salt, and pepper. Stir gently to coat the chickpeas in the spices, careful not to break them up.
3. Pour the chickpeas onto a baking sheet in a single layer. Bake for about 30 to 40 minutes. Stir gently every 10 to 15 minutes to prevent burning. Remove from the oven when browned and crispy. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Per Serving
Calories: 203

Fat: 9g
Sodium: 502mg
Carbohydrates: 24g
Fiber: 7g
Protein: 8g

Pecan Chicken Bites

This recipe combines sweet pecans with savory chicken for a quick dinner that is full of vitamin B6 and minerals. You will enjoy this toasted, crunchy topping on chicken.

Serves 4



Ingredients

12 ounces chicken breast, cut into pieces

½ cup buttermilk

½ cup bread crumbs

½ cup pecans, finely chopped

1 teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F and lightly grease a baking sheet or pan. In a shallow dish or a sealable plastic bag, combine the chicken and buttermilk. Allow the chicken to marinate for 10 minutes while you prepare the other ingredients.
2. On a plate or in a shallow dish, combine the bread crumbs, pecans, salt, and pepper. Remove the chicken from the buttermilk, one piece at a time, and coat in the pecan mixture.
3. Arrange the pieces of chicken on the baking sheet or pan in a single layer. Bake for about 20 minutes, or until the pecans have browned and the chicken has cooked through. Serve warm.

Per Serving

Calories: 253

Fat: 12g

Sodium: 767mg
Carbohydrates: 13g
Fiber: 2g
Protein: 23g

Appetizer or Main Course

Cut into very small bite-size pieces and serve the cooked chicken at a cocktail party with toothpicks and a honey mustard sauce for dipping. You can also coat whole chicken breasts in the pecans. Serve them with a side of Spicy Sautéed Greens (Chapter 3) or slice them up and serve them over salad.

Hot Tropical Amaranth with Coconut

If you are looking for a change from your daily oatmeal or oat bran, try amaranth. It cooks up like a porridge for a delicious whole-grain breakfast. Here, coconut and pineapple add sweetness and tropical flavor.

Serves 1



Ingredients

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup amaranth
- 1 teaspoon muscovado sugar
- 2 tablespoons coconut milk
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh pineapple, diced
- 1 tablespoon unsweetened shredded coconut

1. Combine the amaranth with 1 cup of water in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to simmer. Cook, stirring often, for 20 to 25 minutes or until the water has been absorbed and the grains are tender.
2. Place the amaranth in a bowl and top with the sugar. Stir to incorporate and melt the sugar. Pour in the coconut milk and add the pineapple and shredded coconut. Serve hot.

Per Serving

Calories: 453

Fat: 14g

Sodium: 9mg

Carbohydrates: 73g

Fiber: 7g

Protein: 14g



Whole Amaranth

Look for whole amaranth in the bulk bin of your health food store, or purchase it online. Just be sure that it is the whole grain and not amaranth flour. Whole amaranth is ideal for hot cereals such as the one featured here. Amaranth flour is finely ground and makes a nutritious addition to bread and muffin batters.

Sautéed Broccoli Raab with Cashews

This is a nutty side dish that pairs well with chicken or fish. It is important to limit sodium intake for PMS, so a very small amount of tamari is used simply to flavor the vegetables and nuts.

Serves 4



Ingredients

- 1 pound broccoli raab
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium onion, thinly sliced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon tamari
- ½ cup raw cashews

1. In a large pot, bring about 6 cups of water to a boil. Add the broccoli raab and cook about 3 to 5 minutes. Remove, chop into pieces, and set aside.
2. In a deep skillet, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat, and add the onion and garlic. Cook for 2 minutes and add the broccoli raab. Sauté for 7 to 10 minutes or until it reaches your desired tenderness.
3. Stir in the tamari and the cashews. Serve warm.

Per Serving

Calories: 151

Fat: 11g

Sodium: 124mg

Carbohydrates: 11g

Fiber: 4g

Protein: 7g



What Is Broccoli Raab?

Broccoli raab is also called rapini or spelled broccoli rabe. It is sometimes used in the cuisines of southern Italy, China, and Portugal. It looks similar to broccoli, is related to the turnip, and is known for having a slight bitter flavor. Boiling before sautéing as suggested in this recipe helps to mellow the bitterness.

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