

## *The 10 Best and The 10 Worst Foods For Your Health*

*Our affluent culture has accustomed us to diets full of fat and protein. But-low-cost, low-calorie carbohydrates, fruits and vegetables are really better for us, The famous Jane Brody, author of the instant best-seller Jane Brody's Good Food Book, tells some of the very best-and some of the absolutely worst -foods you can eat.*

### THE 10 BEST

**1. Broccoli and carrots: Nutrient bargains.** The whole family of dark green and deep red vegetables is low in calories and loaded with vitamin A (a single carrot provides half a week's requirements). These vegetables are high in fiber and contain a natural cancer-preventive agent. (Cooked carrots are better absorbed by the body than raw ones.)

**2. Oats: The value of a Cadillac for the price of a Ford.** Oats is a rich source of protein, and the fiber in oats-the stuff that makes oatmeal gummy-helps reduce cholesterol and normalize blood sugar. If you prepare your oatmeal with skim milk rather than water, you got a protein and calcium bonus. Instant oatmeal is not as good as cooked oatmeal because it's made with lots of salt and sometimes lots of sugar.

**3. Cabbage and its family (cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, kale, kohlrabi):** Not just for cole slaw. A natural cancer-preventive substance reduces the risk of colon cancer, a major cancer killer in the US.

**4. Potatoes: Another supernutrient bargain.** For 100 calories in a five-ounce potato (fewer than in many "diet" foods) you get a high percentage of vitamin C, protein, iron, riboflavin, thiamine, niacin, phosphorus and magnesium. Don't cook potatoes in fat or add sour cream or butter. Good addition: Yogurt flavored with dill, pepper or horseradish. Sometimes I just put my cooked vegetables on a potato-it's nutritious and attractive.

**5. Yogurt and skim milk. Versatility galore.** Milk contains protein, and the calcium helps to prevent weakening of the bones. Yogurt has some advantages over milk, although it's more expensive. Since it takes time to consume, you really feel that you've eaten something. You can eat it with fruit or vegetables and use it as the thickening agent in soups and other recipes. In desserts that traditionally are loaded with whipped cream or cream cheese, yogurt is a good, and unnoticeable, substitute. Yogurt is a perfect ingredient for dips and salad dressings. Preparation hint: Adding fresh fruit to plain yogurt is much better than eating pre-flavored yogurt. Even if you put sugar in the yogurt, you will probably use much less than is added to commercial brands. Frozen yogurt is better than ice cream from a fat standpoint-but it still has quite a bit of sugar.

**6. Pasta Good for you. But watch out for the sauce! Pasta is not a fattening food. It contains protein, vitamins and minerals. Even white pasta is a good source of essential nutrients. You can make pasta sauces that are very low in fat and calories. A spaghetti dinner with a meat and tomato sauce has fewer calories than just the steak part of a steak dinner and offers two and a half times the amount of food. For the pasta gourmet: Try a foray into buckwheat pasta, a Japanese specialty.**

**7. Fish: Especially sardines and shellfish. All varieties of fish have an ingredient that protects against heart disease by helping to lower blood cholesterol levels and prevent blood clots. Sardines are among the easiest fish to buy and if eaten with the bones are very high in calcium (as good as milk). Shellfish is very low in calories and fat; the fat it does contain is one that protects you. Save the most expensive shellfish-lobster and crabmeat -for special occasions. Include mussels, oysters, and shrimp regularly in your diet. Do not add saturated animal fat in preparation in restaurants, order fish broiled without butter. Poached fish is a good no-fat choice-order the fatty, high-calorie sauce on the side.**

**8. Bread and whole grains: The staff of life. I think the reason that millions of Americans limp around all day is because they don't eat enough bread. Bread should be a pan of every meal, and it's a good snack food. Of course, I prefer whole-grain bread (it has 18 more nutrients than white bread). Beware: Bread that isn't white in color is not necessarily whole wheat. If the first ingredient on the label is enriched white flour; it is not a whole-grain bread. The first ingredient should be a whole grain such as oats or ( usually) whole wheat. For dieters. The latest studies have shown that about 30% of the calories in bread are not absorbed by the body if you eat a slice of bread with 100 calories, you absorb only 70 calories. You get something for nothing.**

**9. Lentils and family (dried peas and beans): Very nutritious and versatile. An excellent source of vegetable protein. the lentil family has a cholesterol-protective substance. Lentils are high in fiber (which is why dried beans leave a gassy legacy-a testimony to the fact that you are eating a health diet). Try them in soups. salads and casseroles. For the lentil novice, lentil soup is the best place to start.**

**10. Fresh fruit: A natural dessert. By calling fresh fruit natural, I don't mean to say that refined sugar is not natural-it is. What I mean is that the sugar in fresh fruit comes in a package loaded with things that are really good for you: Fiber, vitamins and minerals. Hint: A fruit is better than a juice because it is more slowly absorbed by the body and more substantive.**

#### **AND A BONUS**

**10+. Popcorn: Great for snackers and exsmokers who want to put something healthful into their mouths Unbuttered, unsalted popcorn contains fiber and a lot of hot air (which is why it has only 23 calories per cup). You can eat an immense**

amount of popcorn before you reach the calorie equivalent of a single cookie. Far variety: Try popcorn with herbs, Parmesan cheese or freshly ground black pepper.

## THE 10 WORST

- 1. Soda pop: The epitome of nutritional bankruptcy. This includes all the soft drinks, carbonated or not. sugar sweetened or artificially sweetened. If you're desperate for something sweet, you're better off having fruit juice.**
- 2. French fries A travesty on the name potato. A wonderful, nutritious food acquires 200 calories of fat when fried (and in a fast-food restaurant you're probably getting dangerous beef fat). Added salt-ugh.**
- 3. Potato chips: You might as well eat butter; they contain a large amount of added fat, as well as lots of salt.**
- 4. Bacon: It's not really meat. As many as 95% of the calories in bacon come from fat. It's high in salt and full of nitrate's and nitrites, which may cause cancer. (Micro. waved bacon, which seems drier, is just as high in fat.)**
- 5. Fettuccine Alfredo and pasta salads: Drowning in a sea of fat. People order pasta thinking that it's healthful then destroy its benefit by ordering it in fatty sauces. And pasta salad requires a great deal of dressing**
- 6. Fast-food super burgers: Six hundred calories-and half of those calories are fat. Interestingly, the plain burgers are not particularly high in fat. But when you throw in the dressing, the cheese and the extra beef. It adds up.**
- 7. Granola bars: Whoever said they are healthful? Granola is high fat. High-sugar cereal. I use it only as a garnish sprinkling a little bit of it on an unsweetened cereal. Granola bars are simply high-calorie cookies. The latest version-the granola candies bars-are no better for you than a Milky Way or Snickers. And they cost more. Bottom line. There is no advantage to eating a granola bar.**
- 8. S'Mores cereal: Probably the worst cereal ever produced. If you went to camp, you know that s'mores are a campfire confection of graham crackers. Toasted marshmallows and chocolate bars. And that's exactly what is in S'Mores cereal More than half the calories come from sugar. You're really eating candy with milk on it.**
- 9. Doughnuts: Worse than no breakfast at all. Not only do doughnuts have the sugar and white flour that we should be cutting back on, but also they're fried. They give me heartburn. Doughnuts put your blood sugar out of whack and they don't stay with you. By the end of the morning, you'll be in bad shape**

**10. Cheese: Not at all a wonder food. Cheese has some redeeming features, and I do use it in my recipes, but in small amounts. Many people who have stopped eating meat (because of their concern with fat and cholesterol) are substituting a huge amount of cheese. They would be better off with the red meat. Reason: Cheese has the same amounts of fat and cholesterol as red meat-and far more salts The wont cheeses: Brie and cream cheese. Cheese spreads have as much fat as hard cheese best cheeses Cottage cheese, part-skim mozzarella, skim milk ricotta and feat cheese. Grated Parmesan goes a long way, and the best hard cheese is Swiss. Although there are also reduced-fat packaged cheeses, I'd rather just have small amounts of the real thing.**

*Bottom Line/Personal interviewed Jane E. Brody. A science and 'mod' writer for The New York Times. Her latest book Jane Bride's Good Food Book. W. Norton & Co., So Fifth Ave., New York 10 110. \$ 19.95.*