

HEALTH



January 2011

Seven Foods That Help You Lose Weight

Every year, it seems the needle on the scale is a little harder to budge. You cut back on portion size; you say, "No, thank you," to dessert; you sign up for an aerobics class -- and yet your jeans size goes up and your energy level goes down. What's going on?

Most people having difficulty losing weight got the idea that food is their enemy when they're trying to lose weight. In fact, it's just the opposite: Befriend the right foods, and the pounds are much more likely to peel off than if you just try to cut calories across the board. Here, seven foods known to nutritionists to boost your body's fat-burning potential.

1. OATS

Wait a minute; aren't oats a carb? Yes and no. Oats are a whole grain, and they're high on what nutritionists call the "satiety index," meaning oats have tremendous power to make you feel full. Not only that, they're also high in soluble fiber, so they cut cholesterol and blood fat. Oats digest slowly, so they don't raise your blood sugar, and they keep you feeling filled up well into the late morning. Old-fashioned steel-cut and rolled oats, with up to 5 grams of fiber per serving, are best, but even instant oatmeal has 3 to 4 grams of fiber per serving.

2. EGGS

Nutritionists have been trying for some years to restore the reputation of the lowly egg. No longer thought to be a cholesterol-booster (eggs contain a different type of cholesterol than that in humans), eggs are a concentrated form of animal protein without the added fat that comes with meat. Dietary studies have repeatedly found that when people eat an egg every morning in addition to (or instead of) toast or cereal, they lose twice as much weight as those who eat a breakfast that's dominated by carbs.

3. SKIM MILK

The combination of calcium, vitamin D, and low-fat protein in skim milk and nonfat yogurt trigger weight loss and help build and maintain lean muscle.

4. APPLES

To keep the pounds at bay, eat an apple -- or two -- a day. Eating an apple a half hour to an hour before a meal has the result of cutting the calories of the meal. Why? The fiber in the apple makes you feel full, so you eat less. Eating apples has other benefits, too; the antioxidants in apples appear to prevent metabolic syndrome, the combination of high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and prediabetes that tends to accompany thickening around the waist. Also, apples are high in pectin, which binds with water and limits the amount of fat your cells can absorb.

5. RED MEATS

Not exactly what you think of as a diet food, right? The dense protein in lean red meat helps you maintain muscle mass -- but of course this assumes you're exercising to build that muscle.

6. CINNAMON

This simple spice appears to have the power to help your body metabolize sugar. Eating as little as 1/4 to 2 teaspoons of cinnamon a day was found to reduce blood sugar levels and cut cholesterol from 10 to 25 percent. So add cinnamon to smoothies, sprinkle it on your cereal, or flavor your coffee with it -- particularly if you take your coffee with cream and sugar. The cinnamon will boost the health benefits of the coffee while helping your body rid itself of the added sugars.

7. ALMONDS AND ALMONDS BUTTER

Another counterintuitive choice; aren't nuts and nut butters supposed to be incredibly fattening? Well, almonds are calorie-dense, but they also pack a huge nutritional punch - - and they're particularly effective in counteracting cholesterol and triglycerides. Eating almonds was as effective as taking a statin. Spreading almond butter on your morning toast gives you a nice protein boost while preventing the carbs in the toast from spiking your blood sugar.

Source: Caring.com