

NUTRITION NEWS

Smart Food Choices for Healthy Aging



As you age, there are certain foods that can help slow the aging process by protecting against physical and cognitive decline. These foods are often referred to as “superfoods.” A superfood is not an entire food group but simply a food that has minimal processing and is considered nutrient dense. This means that these foods not only are a great source of vitamins and minerals, but they also have antioxidant properties, contain healthy fats, and different compounds that help reduce illness and aging complications. So what are these superfoods and how can we include them in our daily diet?

First, let's dive into the top superfoods a person can include in their day to day eating pattern. This first food is often underestimated but it packs a powerful punch: blueberries! Blueberries are packed with antioxidants which help fight against aging. Raspberries, blackberries, and strawberries function very similarly in our body and are excellent foods to consume daily. Next, dark leafy greens, like spinach and kale, and foods known as cruciferous vegetables (broccoli, cabbage, and brussels sprouts) are rich in carotenoids and phytochemicals which help protect our cells from damage. These foods are also high in fiber which significantly benefit our GI health and blood sugar management.

While fruits and vegetables are well known for benefitting our health in many ways, there are also many protein options that are also considered superfoods. Fatty fish, like salmon, are packed with protein and healthy fats like omega 3 and 6 which help reduce heart disease. Plain Greek yogurt is another example of a protein option that is known as a superfood. Not only is it high in protein and calcium, it is a great source of probiotics which help create a healthy, happy GI system. Lastly, eggs (both the yolk and the white) are essential for healthy aging. They are an excellent source of B12, Vitamin D, Selenium, and Choline, all of which are responsible for supporting brain health.

Nuts and seeds are also considered superfoods. They are packed with antioxidants, fiber, and healthy fats. They also provide what is called plant protein. Plant protein is found in foods that are not animal source. Things like beans, legumes, vegetables, soy, and nuts/seeds are all examples of plant protein options. Eating a handful or two of nuts and seeds a day are a great way to not only provide your body with the many benefits they provide but to also increase your protein intake.

When trying to determine if a food is a superfood or not, look at its color. Foods that are red, purple, or green often are superfoods! While these individual foods alone do not create a balanced diet, they certainly are very important to include on a regular basis! For any further questions, contact your doctor or Vanessa, your COA dietitian.