

10 Foods for Women

Though everyone would probably benefit from following a healthy meal plan, nutritional requirements do tend to vary by age and gender. Women have specific requirements, and most women are more stressed out than ever these days. In order to take proper care of her body, it is more imperative than ever for a woman to eat the right foods. Fortunately, the experts at eDiets have compiled a list of 10 of the foods most important to female nutrition.

10. Bean There, Done That

As the popular children's rhyme tells us, beans are good for the heart. They are also nutritious, low in fat and inexpensive. In fact, one half-cup serving of beans contains more than 5 grams of fiber, which is one quarter of the recommended daily allowance.

9. Kale to the Chief

In case you weren't aware, kale is actually a member of the cabbage family. Kale is also a great source of folate, a water-soluble B vitamin that occurs naturally in food. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) actually recommend that women consume 400 micrograms of folate every day. Suffering from a folate deficiency during pregnancy can cause neural-tube defects in babies.

8. Beta Sight

Though the name is derived from the Latin word for carrot, beta-carotenes are actually natural chemicals that belong to the carotenoid family. Aside from carrots, beta-carotene is found in orange squashes, pumpkin, butternut squash and sweet potatoes. Since the body converts beta-carotene into vitamin A, this nutrient helps repair your skin and may even reduce your risk for breast cancer.

7. Just the Flax, Ma'am

Flax seeds and flax seed oil are an excellent source of omega-3 fatty acids, which can help protect the heart. This is extremely important, since heart disease remains the leading cause of premature death among women. Flax also contains substances called lignans, which are an excellent source of fiber. One way to add flax to your diet is to grind your own seeds and add them to that bowl of cereal in the morning.

6. Iron It Out

To have a well-balanced diet, it is imperative to meet your body's iron requirements. Instead of just taking iron in supplement form, women should get as much of it as they can from the food they eat. The iron found in food is easier for the body to absorb. Great sources of iron include Lean red meats, dark poultry and lentils.

5. Oh Boy, It's Soy!

Eating plenty of phytoestrogen-rich soybeans can help women significantly lower their bad cholesterol (LDL) and raise the good (HDL) cholesterol. One great source of soy protein is tofu. Even if you aren't a tofu fan, there are many innovative ways to include it in your food. You can even pulse some firm tofu in a food processor and use it in place of ricotta cheese in your lasagna. Mama mia!

4. Water, Water Everywhere

Drinking plenty of water is essential for the health of men and women alike. Water is also one of the best tools in the weight loss game, since it suppresses the appetite and helps your body metabolize stored fat.

3. Broccoli Power!

Even though former President George Herbert Walker Bush refused to eat his little trees, broccoli

is absolutely essential to a woman's health. Broccoli is a fabulous source of calcium and contains other important nutrients like potassium and B vitamins.

2. Chalk up the Calcium

Though the Recommended Daily Allowance of calcium is about 800mg a day, some experts claim that most women should get almost twice this amount. Eating plenty of yogurt and other dairy products is a great way for older women to protect themselves against osteoporosis.

1. Something's Fishy Here!

There's nothing a woman enjoys more than salmon-chanted evening. This particular fish is a great source of omega-3 fatty acids. Salmon is also high in protein and low in cholesterol -- not to mention the fact that it contains B vitamins, calcium, zinc, iron and magnesium