Dr. Marlene's
NATURAL HEALTH CONNECTIONS

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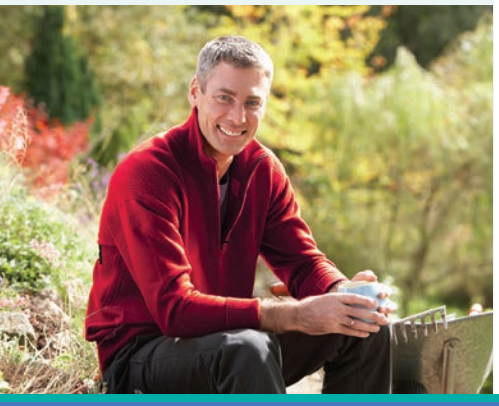
CONTENTS



Superfoods: What They Are and How To Benefit

We've been hearing about them for years now, but how do you tell which foods really are superfoods? And what can they do?

When a food is called "super," does that mean it's like Superman? Well, we know that a food can't leap tall buildings or move faster than a speeding bullet. Does it have extraordinary powers?

In a sense, it does. A bite of a superfood won't miraculously turn you into a stronger, younger version of yourself. But compared to many other things you could be eating, a superfood is especially nutritious and beneficial for your health.

Over time, superfoods really *can* help you become stronger and healthier — if you eat them the right way. Note that I said superfoods — plural. No single food is going to provide you with all the nutrients you need or dramatically improve your health. And superfoods need to be part of a wholesome, naturally low-carb diet — that's eating them the right way.

So, what is a superfood? There is no scientific or other standardized definition. The word originated in 1917 as a marketing term to encourage Americans to eat bananas, which started to be imported in large amounts at that time.

Physicians and medical journals of that era helped popularize bananas as a superfood. Doctors reported that the fruit had amazing healing powers, curing, among other things, diabetes and celiac disease. And the American Medical Association endorsed bananas as a cure for celiac disease in children. (Gluten had yet to be identified as the culprit.)

In recent years, market researchers have found that describing a food as a "superfood" can more than double its sales. Marketing aside, the idea of a superfood is an appealing one. But is there really such a thing as a superfood? Yes, there is.

To me, superfoods are those that are exceptionally rich in nutrients and don't have the downside of

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:
Food Sensitivities: How To Avoid Them

being overly rich in carbohydrates. In some cases, they are also largely overlooked in today's diets.

I base my choice of superfoods on science, my education, and my experience with patients. I've also covered some of these foods and related topics in earlier newsletter issues, which I've listed in *Related to This Topic* on page 6.

Along with describing each superfood below, I've included a snapshot of other foods that should be part of your regular diet, in *What Else To Eat.* And now, here are the superfoods.

Dr. Marlene's
NATURAL HEALTH CONNECTIONS

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Blueberries

All berries are healthy foods, with more fiber and less carbs than most other fruits, and an array of antioxidants and other plant compounds that help keep us in good shape. But blueberries have gained superfood status.

Studies of blueberries have found that the combination of nutrients in these little fruits — a variety of vitamins, minerals, and especially anthocyanins, a specific type of plant nutrient — produces significant benefits.

Eating blueberries on a regular basis helps improve the function of the heart and blood vessels. The berries help keep blood vessels elastic and dilated, which enhances blood flow. They reduce risk for prediabetes and type 2 diabetes by helping regulate levels of insulin and blood sugar. They improve gut health, reduce harmful chronic inflammation, and enhance mental function.[1]

One study of men and women between the ages of 50 and 65 tested the effects of just a half-cup of blueberries daily, consumed for 12 weeks. Those in the study were not diabetic but were overweight and had insulin resistance, which raises risk for prediabetes, type 2 diabetes, and dementia.

As far as their mental function, study participants were considered to be healthy. But subjectively, they felt that their memory and other mental faculties were not as sharp as they used to be. This is generally considered to be "age-related" mental decline, but not a disease.

At the end of 12 weeks, their memory, learning ability, and overall mental function and insulin function had significantly improved. This was observable in testing and, perhaps most importantly, in the self-rating of memory and mental performance by the

The Superfood List

These are the superfoods I recommend including in your diet, along with a variety of other foods and drinks in *What Else To Eat,* on page 5. As well as being super nutritious, the foods below are either low in carbs or, in the case of meat and seafood, contain zero carbs.

Blueberries
Liver
Seaweed
Fermented foods
Bone broth
Cruciferous vegetables *(such as broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower)*
Allium vegetables *(such as garlic and onions)*
Sardines
Oysters

Where To Start

If any of these foods are already part of your usual diet, keep eating them. For any you don't normally eat, pick one item from the list and have a little bit of it today. Tomorrow, have a bit of another one of these foods.

This way, you can gradually incorporate them into your usual diet and experience more benefits. The list above can also be a handy reminder of foods to include when you're making a shopping list.

study participants themselves.[2]

A half-cup of blueberries is not a huge amount. If you don't have a measuring cup, it's about 53 berries. Do you need to count the carbs? Yes. A half-cup contains 11 grams, which is not high for fruit — a medium banana has 27 grams of carbs.

Liver

Liver used to be one of our regularly eaten meats. But it fell out of favor, despite being recognized as an exceptionally nutritious food many years ago.

Liver is an extremely rich source of essential nutrients. Compared to red meat, it contains over 1,300 times more vitamin A, 19 times more vitamin D, 60 times more vitamin B12, and 3 times more iron. Compared to an apple, it contains 4 times more vitamin C and 3 times as much magnesium. It's also a good source of other vitamins and minerals.

Liver is almost like a multivitamin from nature. And that holds true about liver from any animal we might eat, farmed or wild.[3]

In the 1950s, Olympic athletes ate liver like a supplement to enhance their performance. And even though food prices keep rising, liver is still one of the cheapest cuts of meat you can buy.

When I recommend liver, people are often surprised. They often ask something like, "Isn't it full of toxins?" That idea is a common myth.

The liver does not store toxins, in animals or in humans. It does *not* work like the air filter in your air-conditioning system. Because your air filter traps dirt, it needs to be periodically replaced. If the liver trapped toxins like a filter, every human on earth would need repeated liver transplants, and human civilization would have died out long ago.

The fatty parts of meat are where toxins are stored. Liver contains virtually no fat.

Here's what the liver does with toxins: In scientific terms, it "conjugates" them. That's a fancy way of saying that the liver alters the chemical properties of toxins so that they can be eliminated, either in urine or in stool. The liver does not hold onto any toxins.

Should you eat organic liver? Sure. I always recommend organic

How To Develop a Taste for Unfamiliar Foods

Some of the superfoods I cover in this article are not among today's popular foods: liver and sardines, for example. This doesn't change the fact that these are extremely nutritious foods.

I'm not saying that you should force yourself to eat foods that you find unappealing, but I encourage you to try new foods. It helps to understand how we develop tastes for certain foods, and what steps you can take to expand your taste horizon for beneficial foods. The same mechanism keeps many people's taste buds chained to unhealthy fast food and other processed fare.

I should also mention that if you struggle with heartburn or other digestive discomfort, that's something you should address right away. I've included some earlier issues on digestion in *Related to This Topic* on page 6.

Getting back to the subject of taste, here's what researchers at the Center for Ingestive Behavior Research, at the University at Buffalo, found by studying how our preferences develop:[4]

- When we put food in our mouth, saliva is the first thing it comes into contact with, before the food reaches our taste buds.
- Saliva contains about 1,000 proteins that influence how we taste food, but not all these proteins are active.
- What we habitually eat determines which proteins in our saliva are active.
- When we eat an unfamiliar food, the proteins we need to experience a pleasant taste may initially be inactive. And that's usually why we find an unfamiliar flavor to be unappealing.
- If we taste a new food multiple times, the related proteins "wake up," so to speak, and our mouth will learn to like that food.
- To develop a taste for a new food, babies, toddlers, and adults of all ages usually need to try it between 8 and 18 times.

I've seen the results of this type of process many times. Among my patients, when parents weaned their children on liver, those children really liked eating liver for the rest of their lives.

One challenge is that processed and sweet foods have more intense flavors that "entertain" our taste buds. Processed foods are usually engineered to do exactly that.

Nature is more subtle, but it can produce many pleasant tastes as well as real health benefits. It just takes repeated exposure to healthy foods, but the effort is well worth it. Expanding your palate will open the door to a greater variety of foods that contribute to your overall health for years to come.

food as much as possible. But if organic liver is not available, regular liver is also beneficial, and I encourage you to eat it.

If you want to mellow the strong taste of liver, soak it in milk — or in plant milk if you don't eat dairy — for one or two hours before cooking. Try pan frying thin slices in butter, bacon fat, or coconut oil. Beware: It cooks quickly, so don't overcook it.

Liver and onions is a delicious dish. I usually recommend liver as a main course once a week. Paté is another way to eat liver, in small quantities as a snack. I included a recipe to make it, as well as more ways to enjoy liver, in an earlier newsletter issue.

Seaweed

Seaweed has been a staple in Asian and Pacific countries since ancient times, and you'll find it in various dishes in restaurants that serve traditional foods of those countries. For example, in Japanese restaurants, you'll find seaweed in salads, sushi, soups, and stews.

There are different kinds of seaweed and, technically, some are considered to be types of algae rather than plants. However, you can think of any seaweed as a vegetable that grows in the sea. There's no need to count the carbs, which are low anyway.

Seaweed is highly nutritious, with all the essential vitamins and minerals, and is a top source of iodine, which is sadly lacking in most American diets.

Iodine is especially necessary for a healthy thyroid and helps prevent breast and prostate cancer. Seaweed is also good for the heart, for healthy blood sugar, and for good digestion, and it helps boost your immune defenses against infectious diseases and reduce risk for cancer.[5]

One simple and tasty way to eat seaweed is in snacks of dried seaweed, which come in single-serve packets. One packet daily provides all the iodine you need. Another way to add much smaller amounts of seaweed to your diet is with furikake, a Japanese seasoning that is traditionally used to flavor rice, vegetables, fish, or meat.

Fermented Foods

Fermented foods contain live bacteria that help populate our gut with beneficial microorganisms for healthy digestion, immunity, and overall good health. Fermented foods include yogurt (dairy or plant-based), kefir, kimchi (Korean fermented vegetables), sauerkraut, pickles, kombucha (fermented tea), and apple cider vinegar (fermented apple juice).

Many studies have shown that these have beneficial effects. One of the most recent, at the University of California, Davis, identified more than 300 different substances that form when cabbage ferments into sauerkraut.

As a result, sauerkraut produced benefits that raw cabbage did not. These included better gut health, protection against harmful effects of inflammation, and healthier intestinal cells, which provide better protection against illnesses.[6]

Some pickles and other fermented foods can be flavored with vinegar instead of being fermented, but they don't deliver the benefits I've been describing. If a product lists vinegar as an ingredient, it isn't fermented: don't buy it.

Real fermented foods may be made with a live culture that triggers the fermentation process. In other cases, the addition of salt and water to a food, over a period of time, creates the fermentation.

When buying fermented foods, look for "cultured" or "live cultures" in the description or ingredients and avoid any products with vinegar. And then, be sure to regularly include some fermented foods in your diet. The serving size doesn't need to be huge. Pickles and other fermented vegetables are traditionally eaten as a condiment, but a little goes a long way in terms of benefits.

Bone Broth

This is nature's most concentrated source of collagen, a vital protein that acts as a glue to support the structure and function of tissue in our bodies, from cartilage in joints to the walls of blood vessels and skin cells, where it helps prevent wrinkles and sags.

For centuries, bone broth has been made by simmering bones of animals to extract collagen and other nutrients from the bones. Today, it's usually made with beef and/or chicken bones. Many recipes also include bits of vegetables as well, for flavor and additional nutrients.

The collagen in bone broth is especially soothing for the digestive tract,[7] which then has a soothing effect on the rest of the body. I included a recipe in an earlier newsletter issue, but you can also buy ready-made bone broth.

When buying bone broth, be aware that "chicken broth" or "beef broth" are not the same thing. They are made from muscle meat (and possibly some bones), and do not

contain enough collagen to have the same therapeutic effect as real bone broth.

Cruciferous Vegetables

So-called because the flowers of these plants make the shape of a cross, cruciferous vegetables include broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, arugula, bok choy, Brussels sprouts, collard greens, mustard greens, kale, radish, turnips, and watercress.

In addition to vitamins, minerals, and fiber, these vegetables contain glucosinates, nutrients that help prevent cancer, high blood pressure, and heart disease, and strengthen the immune system. Studies have linked eating these vegetables daily to a healthier, longer life.[8]

Allium Vegetables

This family of vegetables includes garlic, onions, chives, shallots, scallions, and leeks. A review of dozens of studies found that routinely eating these vegetables helped to prevent gastric, esophageal, laryngeal, and prostate cancer, and polyps in the colon and rectum.

In addition, garlic in particular helps lower blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar, and protects you from getting sick. Altogether, this helps prevent heart disease, cancer, and type 2 diabetes, and helps lower blood sugar in people who already have diabetes.[9]

Historically, these vegetables have been eaten as foods, to flavor other foods, and as natural medicines. The benefits come from eating them on a regular basis. They can be eaten raw or cooked and can contribute to delicious flavors as well as enhancing health.

Sardines

Sardines aren't a popular menu item in this country, but they should be. They are especially rich in omega-3 fat — the kind found in fish oil supplements. One study by Harvard University researchers found that eating 1–2 servings per week could substantially reduce risk for heart disease and earlier death.[10] (One serving is 3.5 ounces; the usual amount in one can.)

Compared to supplements of fish oil, sardines also provide healthy protein and a variety of essential vitamins and minerals. Studies have also found that the omega-3 fats in sardines improve brain and eye health, lower chronic inflammation, improve joint and skin health, reduce depression, and lower risk of dementia.

If you don't like the strong taste of sardines, they are available in tomato or lemon sauces, and some are flavored with hot spices.

Oysters

Oysters are exceptionally rich in zinc, which strengthens the immune system. They also contain healthy omega-3 fats, protein, and a variety of essential vitamins and minerals. In addition to enhancing immunity, they are good for the heart, brain, and overall health.[11]

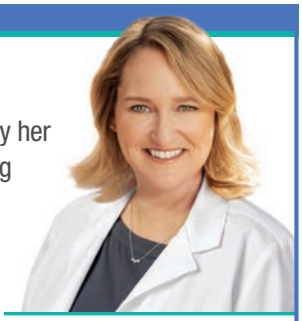
Canned oysters are an easy and affordable way to add this beneficial seafood to your diet.

What Else To Eat

Superfoods work best when they are part of a good diet. For most adults today, that means eating whole foods that are both nutritious and naturally low in carbs. For a varied, nutritious diet, these are good foods to include:

Meat: Beef is more nutritionally dense than chicken, but include both for a variety of nutrients and protein sources.

About Dr. Marlene



Dr. Marlene Merritt's passion for natural medicine is fueled by her drive to help others and by her own experience of overcoming a debilitating heart condition, diagnosed at the age of 20. A competitive cyclist at the time, she suddenly began experiencing severe chest pains. Forced to quit the sport, she suffered from fatigue and chest pain for another 15 years, despite doing everything that conventional, Western medical doctors told her to do.

And then, the tide turned. A physician trained in naturopathic healing recommended a whole-food vitamin E supplement. A week after starting the supplement regimen, her energy began to return, and the pain began to disappear.

Dr. Marlene is a Doctor of Oriental Medicine, has a Master's degree and is board-certified in Nutrition, and is board-certified in Functional Medicine. She is certified in the Bredesen MEND Protocol™, a groundbreaking method of addressing Alzheimer's disease, and is a Proficiency Diplomate in the Shoemaker CIRS protocol for treatment of mold-related illness. She is the author of *Smart Blood Sugar* and *The Blood Pressure Solution*, and co-author of *The Perfect Sleep Solution*. After 31 years in private clinical practice, she now focuses on writing and educating health professionals and consumers to reach more people and positively impact their health.

Fish and seafood: In addition to sardines, mackerel, herring, and wild salmon are good choices of fish. And in addition to oysters, eat a variety of shellfish.

Mushrooms: As well as providing an array of nutrients, mushrooms can add texture and different flavors to foods.

Leafy greens: Eat different types.

Bright colors: The bright colors of vegetables, such as red, yellow, purple, and orange, are produced by different plant nutrients. To get a variety of the nutrients, eat a variety of colors of non-starchy vegetables.

Avocado: A source of healthy fat, avocado is very versatile. It's a tasty addition to salads and makes a good snack on celery.

Other healthy fats: See my earlier issue, listed in the chart below.

Beverages: Water, coffee, black tea, green tea, and herbal teas are all beneficial. They can be hot or cold, flat or carbonated. Coffee and black and green teas provide health benefits with or without caffeine.

Organic food: I try to be practical, and I know it isn't always possible to buy organic versions of food. However, I do recommend buying organic as much as possible.

A Final Word

We sometimes hear that nuts, seeds, and whole grains are superfoods. Although in moderation these foods can be part of a healthy diet, I don't view them as superfoods for specific reasons.

Whole grains (and refined grains) are high in carbs. We can get the same nutrients from other sources, with fewer carbs.

Seeds and nuts can be good snacks, in small quantities. Although they provide nutrients, they also contain antinutrients: substances that block absorption of some vitamins and minerals. I'll explain antinutrients in more detail in next month's newsletter.

Bottom line: seeds, nuts, and whole grains can all be part of a healthy diet. But they don't rise to superfood status in my mind.

It's easy to follow the same old eating habits, but it's always good to take a new look at things and consider ways to eat better. I hope my superfoods list helps you eat a more varied diet, discover some new tastes, and enhance your health and well-being.

Related to This Topic

These are some earlier issues of this newsletter that address related topics:

Related Topic	Volume	Issue	Title
A Healthy Diet	7	1	My Low-Carb Diet — Fine-Tuned
Liver	1	2	Liver: Nature's Superfood (page 7)
Vitamin A	5	7	Vitamin A: The Right Kind (page 8)
Seaweed and Iodine	2	7	The 30-Day Thyroid Restoration Protocol
Digestion	5	10	Leaky Gut: Hidden Cause of Digestive Woes
Digestion	1	6	The 6-Minute Heartburn Remedy
Bone Broth	4	5	Collagen: How It Helps You Stay Young, Strong, and Pain-Free
Healthy Fats	4	11	Healthy Fats: Deadly Myths and Life-Saving Facts
Meat	3	2	The Diabetic's Guide to Eating Meat
Spices	7	11	Herbs and Spices for Better Health
Healthy Carbs	3	6	The Diabetic's Guide to Eating Carbs

Access these online by logging in to www.NaturalHealthConnections.com.

1 Stull, A.J., et al. "The state of the science on the health benefits of blueberries: a perspective." Front Nutr. 2024 Jun 11;11:1415737.
2 Krikorian, R., et al. "Blueberry Supplementation in Midlife for Dementia Risk Reduction." Nutrients. 2022 Apr 13;14(8):1619.
3 Kicińska, A., et al. "Micro- and macroelement contents in the liver of farm and wild animals and the health risks involved in liver consumption." Environ Monit Assess. 2019 Feb 6;191(3):132.
4 Martin, L.E., et al. "Bitter-Induced Salivary Proteins Increase Detection Threshold of Quinine, But Not Sucrose." Chem Senses. 2019 Jul 17;44(6):379-388.
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HOW TO STOP NERVE DISCOMFORT

and Get Normal Feeling in Your Hands and Feet Again

Are you annoyed by occasional nerve discomfort? That's putting it mildly. It's probably driving you crazy – making simple tasks difficult and preventing you from enjoying life.

Well, here's good news, even if you've tried everything and are ready to give up…

The only way to silence nerve discomfort is to actually nourish and repair your nerve network. How? By giving your nerves the exact nutrients they need to thrive.

If you're a gardener, you're no doubt familiar with a product called *Miracle-Gro*®. It provides the precise nutrients that plants need to thrive. And to gardeners who see their plants come alive and stay healthy, it does seem like a miracle.

It's the same for your nerves. If you're suffering occasional nerve discomfort, you need specific nutrients that can bring your network back to good health. Restore that normal feeling. And make life enjoyable again.

How? That's easy. Use Primal Labs' ***Advanced Nerve Support***.

Advanced Nerve Support contains a special form of vitamin B1 called Benfotiamine. Studies show **Benfotiamine helped patients feel greater "touch" sensory perception, and a lower level of nerve discomfort.**

Advanced Nerve Support also contains vitamins B6 and B12. **Vitamin B6** ensures the messengers along your nerve network – your neurotransmitters – can communicate properly. Here's how…

Vitamin B6 helps sooth tender nerves by helping them maintain healthy coverings. You see, your nerves are covered by a special material called the myelin sheath. It's like the insulation on electrical wires. If this insulation gets frayed or broken, the signals to the brain will be garbled.

That's when normal sensation is compromised and the feeling can be off, or even the opposite of what it should be. The result is discomfort.

Vitamin B12 aids in the normal repair of the myelin sheath. And it also nourishes the precious nerve fibers inside the sheath. Studies show B12 increases nerve regeneration, while reducing ectopic nerve firings – those acute, random sensations that seem to have no source.

When you combine B-12 with Benfotiamine and vitamin B6, *it's like Miracle-Gro® for your nerves*, helping to bring about rejuvenation and soothing relief. ***Advanced Nerve Support*** also contains **Acetyl-L-carnitine and Alpha Lipoic Acid** – two more nutrients that nerves need for healthy function.

Studies show that Acetyl-L-Carnitine "promotes a healthy nervous system and normal nerve response." And Alpha Lipoic Acid, taken daily, may significantly reduce nerve discomfort in as little as 3 weeks.

As you can see, ***Advanced Nerve Support*** has everything you need to soothe your nerves and restore normal feeling.

Advanced Nerve Support contains no egg, milk, peanuts, tree nuts, shellfish, fish, soy, wheat, gluten, sugar or preservatives.

Ready for relief? Good, because right now you can get 15% off any size order of ***Advanced Nerve Support***. Simply visit the URL below to lock in your special savings.

Don't wait. Order now.
Your nerves will be glad you did!

Visit PrimalSpecials.com/Nerve
to Save 15% on your order

The Banana Myth

A recent Canadian study concluded that increasing potassium may be more effective in lowering blood pressure than simply eating less sodium.[1] And it prompted many headlines promoting bananas.

"High blood pressure? Eat more bananas," was the general message. Another sample headline: "A Banana a Day May Keep the High Blood Pressure Away." Headlines like these create a false notion that all you need do to control blood pressure is eat bananas.

The study itself, by researchers at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada, wasn't about bananas. It was done using a computer simulation of the human body, which tested the effects of potassium and sodium. And the conclusion was that the ratio of sodium to potassium in a diet is more important than sodium alone.

For health practitioners who understand how nutrients work in the human body, this is not news. I covered the topic on pages 8 and 9 of last month's newsletter: *Blood Pressure and Salt*. If you aren't familiar with this concept, I encourage you to take a look at the article.

As you may already know, today's healthcare system often doesn't take physiology and basic nutrition into account. But it's well known that sodium is much more abundant in North American diets than potassium.

It's no secret why this imbalance occurs: Processed foods, which are much higher in sodium than whole, fresh foods, make up the majority of most diets. And processed foods are not good sources of potassium.

In contrast, fresh foods, from plants and animals, contain potassium. And a varied diet of such foods will naturally solve the problem.

Why Bananas Got Headlines

The study that garnered the headlines does not mention bananas at all. But in a statement to the media, one of the study's co-authors said this: "Our research suggests that adding more potassium-rich foods to your diet, such as bananas or broccoli, might have a greater positive impact on your blood pressure than just cutting sodium."

Note: The examples of potassium-rich foods were bananas *or broccoli*. But only bananas made headlines.

Why? Few people want to hear that they should eat more broccoli. But bananas — well, okay. They're ready to eat, easy to find, and they're sweet. And there lies the problem.

I'm not against eating bananas; they are a good source of potassium. However, they are also a rich source of carbs that can contribute to elevated insulin, blood sugar, and —yes — blood pressure! Last month's article about blood pressure and salt explains how that works.

If you're familiar with my low-carb diet, you know that I recommend counting and limiting carbs in certain categories of foods, including fruit. That's because in today's world, those foods are a major contributor to unhealthy carb overload.

I also recommend variety: Don't rely on bananas for potassium.

Bananas and Other Potassium Sources Compared

Potassium is essential for maintaining healthy levels of blood pressure, and there are many food sources of the mineral. Here's how some low-carb versions compare with a banana:

Food	Portion	Potassium Content in milligrams (g)	Carb Content in grams (g)
Banana	1 medium	451	27

If you're following my low-carb eating approach, you don't need to count carbs in the foods below, but I've included carb content so that you can compare it with bananas. I hope you include these foods in your diet:

Beet greens, cooked	½ cup	655	3.5
Swiss chard, cooked	½ cup	481	3.6
Spinach, cooked	½ cup	420	1
Salmon, beef sirloin, or chicken breast	3 ounces	315–330	0

I recommend limiting carbs from fruit, grains, and other sources of carb overload to 60 grams per day. With 27 grams of carbs, one banana constitutes almost half that daily amount. For details on my low-carb eating plan, see earlier newsletter issues listed on page 6.

1 Stadt, M., et al. "Modulation of blood pressure by dietary potassium and sodium: sex differences and modeling analysis." Am J Physiol Renal Physiol. 2025 Mar 1;328(3):F406-F417.

Seasonal Allergies: 3 Quick Natural Fixes

If you suffer from seasonal allergies, any one of these natural remedies often relieve symptoms:

- A homeopathic remedy designed for symptoms that match yours. Products list symptoms on labels.
- Mix one teaspoon of apple cider vinegar in a glass of water and drink it when you feel symptoms beginning. Then rinse your mouth with plain water to prevent vinegar from damaging tooth enamel. You can do this several times per day.
- Take betaine HCL with pepsin with meals, per product directions. However, don't do this if you have a peptic ulcer.

Volume 3, Issue 3, of this newsletter: *Quick Fixes and Lasting Cures for Seasonal Allergies,* explains how to prevent seasonal allergies.

Exercise and Sleep

I sometimes run into people who tell me that they are having trouble sleeping, despite the fact that they exercise vigorously in the evening to try and tire themselves out before bed. I discourage them from continuing this strategy, which isn't working anyway.

You need to wind down before going to sleep. It's a natural part of our circadian rhythm. And a recent study found quite precise connections between evening exercise and sleep quality.

At Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, researchers studied how evening exercise influences sleep.[1] More than 14,000 people took part in the study, which lasted one year. Participants wore fitness trackers on their wrists that monitored physical activity, sleep quality, and heart function around the clock.

The study found that intense exercise close to bedtime had the most negative effect on sleep, making it harder to fall and stay asleep, with less deep sleep and a higher heart rate during the night — all signs of poor sleep. This negative effect was strongest when people did intense exercise less than four hours before bedtime.

In contrast, intense exercise earlier in the day, with exercise sessions ending four or more hours before bedtime, did not disrupt sleep. Closer to bedtime, light exercise did not disturb sleep.

Other studies show that regular exercise increases natural production of melatonin, which regulates sleep cycles. Exercise also reduces stress, improves mood, and can help people fall asleep faster and sleep more deeply.[2] Just don't do intense exercise too late in the day.

The Tortoise and the Hare

Slow and steady can win many races: Gradual, sustainable improvements in a diet and gradual weight loss usually work well. On the other hand, moving more briskly in everyday life can improve the health of the heart and blood vessels, according to a recent study of more than 24,000 people in the United Kingdom who did not regularly exercise.[3]

These findings apply to everyday tasks such as cleaning house, doing other household chores, gardening, walking to run errands, taking stairs instead of an elevator, or even walking from a parking spot to the entry of a store — especially if you park at the far end of the lot and walk briskly rather than sauntering.

Beneficial spurts of activity don't need to last long, according to the study. About three minutes of brisk movement that raises your heart rate a bit is most beneficial.

The heart-healthy benefit of such activity is comparable to one minute of vigorous movement: the kind where you're breathing too hard to carry on a conversation.

This doesn't mean that you shouldn't get regular exercise — you should. And it should include bursts of vigorous activity. But since brisk movement in the course of everyday activities is also beneficial, it's a good place to start if you aren't already doing any regular exercise.

1 Leota, J., et al. "Dose-response relationship between evening exercise and sleep." Nat Commun. 2025 Apr 15;16(1):3297. 2 Alnawwar, M.A., et al. "The Effect of Physical Activity on Sleep Quality and Sleep Disorder: A Systematic Review." Cureus. 2023 Aug 16;15(8):e43595. 3 Stamatakis, E., et al. "Dose Response of Incidental Physical Activity Against Cardiovascular Events and Mortality." Circulation. 2025 Apr 15;151(15):1063-1075.

Beware of Plastics

Plastics make our lives convenient, but they have a dark side. Plastics degrade into microscopic particles that we can inhale, eat, or absorb through our skin.

These particles get deposited into our organs and other tissues and disrupt normal functions. And plastics contain at least 1,600 different chemicals that can leach into our systems.

Bottom line: plastics are a health hazard. Studies show that they disrupt hormones and normal reproduction; contribute to obesity, heart disease, asthma, allergies, lung diseases, autoimmune conditions, Alzheimer's disease, joint problems, and cancers; and reduce healthy responses to vaccines.[1]

Other research has found that plastics disrupt the function of the mitochondria, which are microscopic energy-generating components of every cell. Mitochondria normally become less efficient in producing energy as we age, and plastics worsen the process. Researchers have said that "mitochondrial dysfunction is particularly pivotal in driving the mechanisms of aging."[2]

How to Reduce Your Exposure

We ingest plastic particles and the chemicals they leach in three ways: by eating foods or drinking liquids that contain plastics, by inhaling airborne particles, and by absorbing toxins from plastics through the skin. Here's how it happens and what to do about it:

In foods and drinks: Plastic particles and toxic chemicals can leach into food from containers and wraps. The worst contamination occurs if we microwave food in plastic containers. A container may be "microwave safe," but this only means that it won't disintegrate in the microwave, not that it won't leach toxins.

Plastic water bottles can leach toxins into water, more so if they're exposed to heat — in the sun or in a hot car, for example, and as they get older. Don't re-use single-use bottles. Plastic containers for storing food, plastic cutting boards, and plastic mixing bowls can also leach toxins.

What to do: Use glass or ceramic containers to microwave and store food, glass or stainless-steel mixing bowls, and wooden cutting boards. Filter tap water

instead of buying water in plastic bottles. For on-the-go beverages, keep them in a stainless-steel or glass water bottle. And eat off real plates with real knives and forks — not plastic ones.

In the air and on our skin: Compared to outdoor air, indoor air is more toxic. Plastic particles and toxins they release can come from air fresheners; various synthetic materials in furniture, window coverings, and flooring; and cleaning, laundry, and personal grooming products such as soaps, skin creams, and lotions.

What to do: Dust and vacuum often to reduce plastic particles and chemical toxins in the air. And avoid cleaning, laundry, air freshening, and personal grooming products that contain "fragrance."

"Fragrance" contains different combinations of chemicals that are not disclosed on packages because they are considered trade secrets. But they contain some of the same toxins released by plastics, such as phthalates. If you like scented products, look for those made with essential oils.

Nutritional Protection

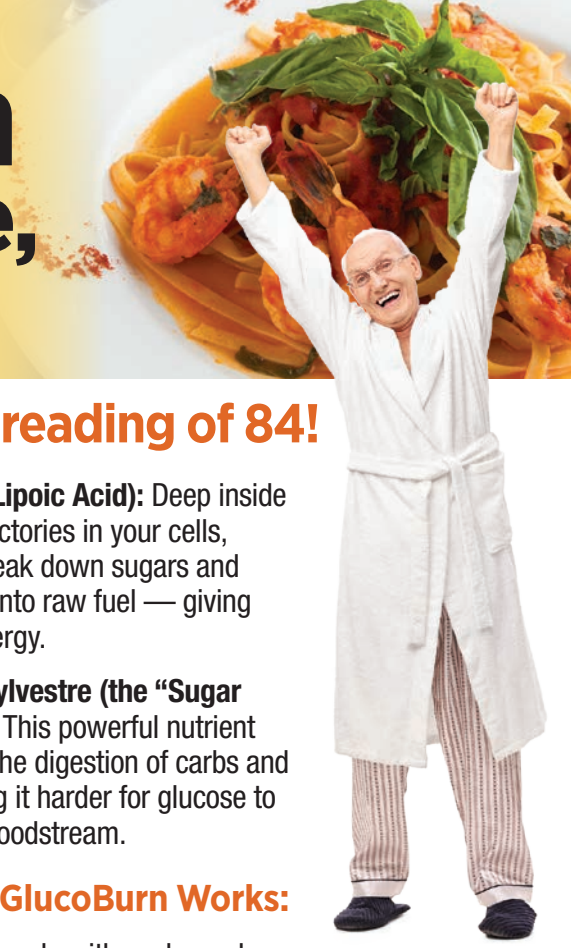
Here are two ways to bolster your internal defenses against plastic pollution with nutrients:

CoQ10 supplements: CoQ10 is a vital nutrient for healthy function of mitochondria, but levels decline as we get older. Studies have found that taking 100 mg or more daily of CoQ10 improves mitochondrial function and cellular energy production.[3]

Vegetables and fruits: A recent study found that anthocyanins — nutrients that give plants their vibrant colors — can help reduce hormonal disruption caused by plastics.[4] This is yet another reason to eat lots of brightly colored vegetables and some fruits.

1 Trasande, L. "Making invisible chemicals used in plastic materials visible." EBioMedicine. 2024 Nov:109:105422.
2 Kong, L., et al. "Microplastics/nanoplastics contribute to aging and age-related diseases: Mitochondrial dysfunction as a crucial role." Food Chem Toxicol. 2025 May:199:115355.
3 Hernández-Camacho, J.D., et al. "Coenzyme Q10 Supplementation in Aging and Disease." Front Physiol. 2018 Feb 5:9:44.
4 Zhang, J., et al. "Exploring the potential protective role of anthocyanins in mitigating micro/nanoplastic-induced reproductive toxicity: A steroid receptor perspective." J Pharm Anal. 2025 Feb;15(2):101148.

70-Year-Old Man Feasts on Pasta, Cheese, Bread, and Wine...



...and wakes up with a normal blood sugar reading of 84!

After getting "the lecture" from his doctor, 70-year old Bob Bianchi finally decided to eat better to help control his blood sugar. And while he wasn't happy about it, he'd been doing pretty well…

Then recently, Bob's son wanted him to celebrate his birthday together at a favorite Italian restaurant. How could Bob turn him down? "I'm just gonna take a night off and go for broke," Bob decided.

And boy did Bob *feast*. He ordered the linguini with shrimp, layered in gooey mozzarella cheese and buried under heaps of sauce. Add in some bread and red wine, and it was heavenly!

So when Bob went to test his blood sugar the next morning, he was ready for bad news. But when the numbers popped up on the screen, he couldn't believe it… His fasting blood sugar **was a mere 84** — smack dab in the middle of the normal range!

How the heck could this happen? Well, Bob had been eating sensibly most of the time, following his doctor's orders. And he'd also been protecting his blood sugar by taking **GlucoBurn** from Primal Labs, a leader in nutritional supplements.

In fact, after just two days of taking Primal Labs' **GlucoBurn**, Bob was shocked to see his morning fasting numbers at 63!

GlucoBurn is an easy-to-swallow gel cap containing four powerful nutrients to help with blood sugar control:

1. **White Mulberry Leaf Extract (the "Sugar Blocker"):** Prevents carbohydrates from getting broken down into sugar, so they never make it to your bloodstream.
2. **Banaba Leaf Extract:** Acts like an insulin copycat because it mimics the way insulin works at the cellular level. This allows your body to burn more sugar.
3. **ALA (Alpha Lipoic Acid):** Deep inside the energy factories in your cells, ALA helps break down sugars and amino acids into raw fuel — giving you more energy.
4. **Gymnema Sylvestre (the "Sugar Destroyer"):** This powerful nutrient slows down the digestion of carbs and sugar, making it harder for glucose to reach your bloodstream.

Here's How GlucoBurn Works:

Just take one capsule with each meal. You'll receive an optimal dose of the pure form of all four nutrients. Their effectiveness is supported by over 25 scientific research studies, including 11 randomized controlled trials, the gold standard of scientific research.

These clinical findings show that the four ingredients in **GlucoBurn**:

- ✓ Support **healthy blood sugar metabolism**
- ✓ **Reduce blood sugar spikes** after meals
- ✓ Support **healthy fasting blood sugar** levels
- ✓ Support **healthy HbA1c levels**
- ✓ **Stimulate insulin** release
- ✓ **Mimic** naturally occurring insulin

YES! You can do all these things with **GlucoBurn**. With blood sugar in the normal range, you'll also enjoy better concentration, more energy, and a brighter mood. Put **GlucoBurn** to the test, and you'll be convinced.

Get GlucoBurn Today!

GlucoBurn.com/NHC3

For Faster Service, call 1-888-309-0629 Monday-Friday 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. CST • Saturday-Sunday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. CST

Q&A

Q: I fall asleep quickly, but then I wake during the night for no reason and can't get back to sleep for hours. What can I do? — *Frank S.*

A: A common reason for this is a hungry brain. The brain is fueled by blood sugar, and when it doesn't have enough fuel during the night, it feels as though it's starving. And then, it wakes you up.

There's an underlying mechanism that leads to this happening: weak adrenals.

The adrenals are two small glands on top of the kidneys. They produce cortisol, which is known as the fight-or-flight hormone, but it also performs other functions. One function of cortisol is to help keep levels of blood sugar stable.

Here's how it's supposed to work during the night: When blood sugar drops, the adrenals should produce just enough cortisol to tell the liver to release some stored blood sugar. That way, levels of blood sugar remain at a stable level, and the blood sugar keeps feeding the brain.

When the adrenal glands are not working as they should, they don't release the cortisol when blood sugar starts to drop, the liver doesn't know it's supposed to release some blood sugar, and the brain suddenly gets hungry and panics a little. And that reaction wakes you up.

The immediate remedy is to have a small, low-carb snack that contains some fat, which will provide some fuel to the brain and help maintain stable blood sugar. A spoonful of peanut butter or a small piece of cheese are good options. Having the same type of small snack before bedtime can help to prevent waking up during the night.

If you use snacks this way for 7 to 10 days, the problem should resolve. You don't have to keep eating late-night snacks for the rest of your life. There are also helpful things you can do during the day to support healthy adrenals.

Adrenals can become weak from skipping meals, going too long between meals, eating a high-carb diet, enduring too much physical or mental stress, or dealing with inflammation from an unhealthy diet or untreated infection or other health condition. In these situations, the adrenals have to work extra hard to maintain stable blood sugar, and they eventually get tired out.

Eating a low-carb diet, and eating more often, helps to restore adrenal health. I describe the process in more detail in an earlier issue of this newsletter: Volume 5, Issue 7, *How to Tap into Hidden Energy*.

Q: My doctor told me I'm prediabetic. I really like yogurt and am wondering which is the best kind to eat? Is it nonfat or low-fat yogurt? — *Lynn R.*

A: In a nutshell, neither nonfat nor low-fat versions are the best choices. Full-fat yogurt has a healthier impact on blood sugar.

Milk, from which yogurt is made, naturally contains lactose, a type of sugar that your body processes the same way as table sugar. The lactose is in the watery part of milk, not in the fat. When fat is removed, nonfat milk contains a higher percentage of lactose than full-fat milk.

For the same reason, nonfat and low-fat yogurts will contain more lactose than full-fat yogurt. In addition, yogurt with no fat or reduced fat is more popular in sweet, flavored versions, to compensate for the natural creaminess and flavor that is lost when the fat is removed.

Full-fat yogurt is more satisfying, and the fat in it helps to keep blood sugar stable. As part of a low-carb diet, it can help lower levels of blood sugar.

That said, carb content of yogurt varies a lot from one brand to another. It pays to compare labels and find a full-fat version that is in the lower range of carbs and that you enjoy.

Do you have a question for Dr. Marlene?

Send your health-related questions to drmarlene@naturalhealthconnections.com. Please include your first name and the initial of your last name. Although she cannot answer each question directly, Dr. Marlene will select a few in each newsletter and will address other questions and concerns in articles in future issues. Answers are intended for educational purposes only and should not be viewed as medical advice. If you need help with your subscription or have questions about Primal Health supplements, email support@primalhealthlp.com or call 877-300-7849.