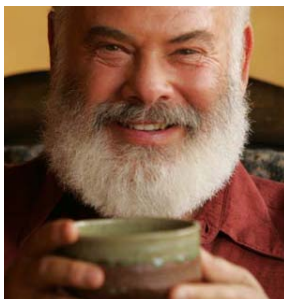


March is Nutrition Month, making it a good time to focus on healthy eating, which should be a way of life for everyone. A varied diet of nutrient-dense, unprocessed foods is not only satisfying, but will provide you with the macro- and micronutrients you need for optimal health in body and mind.

This issue of *Balanced Living* takes a closer look at nutrition, including antioxidant-rich foods, nutrition tips for digestion, a challenge to follow



my Anti-Inflammatory Diet and more. For more nutrition guidance, consider joining [Dr. Weil on Healthy Aging](#), [The Online Guide To The Anti-Inflammatory Diet](#).

Yours in health,

Andrew Weil, M.D.



Antioxidant-Rich Foods And Beverages

[Antioxidants](#) help counter oxidative stress, a process which can damage cells and may accelerate aging. Antioxidants may also boost your immune system and decrease your risk of infection. The best source of antioxidant vitamins and minerals is a whole-some, varied, rainbow-colored diet, while a daily [antioxidant supplement](#) can help to fill in any gaps in a healthy diet.

The following list, culled from an extensive study published in the *Nutrition Journal*, describes some commonly found beverages, spices and foods that have high antioxidant potential. Print this list out and keep it in your wallet as a guide when you go

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9 Nutrition Tips For Healthy Digestion

If you suffer from occasional indigestion, gas, constipation, [irritable bowel syndrome](#) or other digestive issues, simple life-style changes can help. In addition to regular exercise, stress management, and prudent supplementation, you can promote healthy digestion through these dietary modifications.

- 1 Eat a diet rich in fiber.** Consume at least 40 grams of soluble and insoluble fiber a day, including whole grains, fruits and vegetables. Slowly increase your dietary intake of fiber in tandem with drinking more water to prevent uncomfortable bloating and constipation.

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Monthly Wellness Challenge



Eating Anti-Inflammatory

Want to begin eating for your health? Then start following the Dr. Weil-recommended [Anti-Inflammatory Diet](#)! This “eating plan for life” focuses on whole foods rich in nutrients and anti-inflammatory properties. Start by checking out [Dr. Weil's Anti-Inflammatory Food Pyramid](#), and use it to help guide your grocery list.

Antioxidant-Rich Foods

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shopping to make sure that your cart contains these naturally healthy and tasty antioxidant food sources in it!

Beverages

- Espresso
- Coffee
- [Red Wine](#)
- Pomegranate juice

Produce

- Artichokes
- Dried fruit including bilberries, apples and plums
- Curly kale
- Red and green chilies

Spices And Herbs

- Cloves (dried, whole or ground)
- Mint leaves (dried)
- Allspice, cinnamon, oregano and thyme (dried and ground)

Snacks

- Nuts, including walnuts, pecans, sunflower seeds and chestnuts
- Dark chocolate

Nutrition And Digestion

continued from p.1



- 2 Drink plenty of fluids.** Water is essential to help keep digestive systems running properly. Drinking fluids after, rather than during, a meal may help minimize symptoms of indigestion. Room temperature to hot water helps support intestinal peristalsis; avoid drinking ice-cold fluids if you have difficulty with indigestion and [constipation](#).
- 3 Keep a food log.** Record everything you eat and how you feel afterwards. It can help you identify the causes or triggers of your digestive issues.
- 4 Eat small meals.** Smaller portions place less demand on the digestive tract and are easier to digest than large meals.
- 5 Drink herbal tea.** [Pure peppermint](#)-leaf tea, steeped for three to five minutes, is an excellent stomach soother. (However, it may worsen esophageal reflux by relaxing the sphincter where the esophagus joins the stomach.) Chamomile tea is a good alternative.
- 6 Try ginger.** Available as a tea, candied slices, or capsules containing powder extracts, ginger is widely known for its digestive effects, particularly in reducing nausea.
- 7 Avoid spicy foods.** They can irritate the digestive tract and trigger indigestion.
- 8 Eat fermented foods.** Fermented foods and beverages including sauerkraut, kimchi, keifer, kombucha, and unsweetened grass-fed yogurts provide digestion-aiding probiotics.
- 9 Practice mindful eating.** Don't chew with your mouth open and don't rush through meals - both can contribute to indigestion. Sit down and eat in a peaceful, nurturing setting.



Yoga Pose: The Bridge Pose

Looking for a yoga pose that can promote digestion, improve circulation, and strengthen your core? Consider trying the Bridge Pose. This yoga pose is commonly used to stretch and strengthen the back and abdominal muscles, as well as open the lungs and chest.

Yoga poses that focus on the lower back such as the Bridge Pose have been shown to alleviate back pain. According to a study published in the *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*, investigators compared the effects of yoga and physical exercise on patients who experience chronic lower back pain. They found that the patients who engaged in yoga had a greater improvement in spinal flexibility and a reduction in [lower back pain](#) than those patients who engaged only in physical exercise.

The health benefits of this pose include:

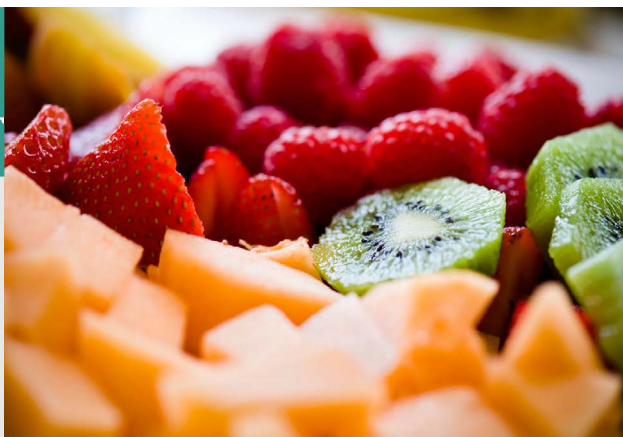
- **Stretching the back and alleviating lower back pain.**
- **Opening the chest and hip flexors.**
- **Strengthening abdominals and core muscles.**
- **Improving digestion.**
- **Improving flexibility of the spine and hips.**

Get [step-by-step instruction](#) for practicing the Bridge Pose. For beginners, the Bridge Pose can be done with a yoga block under the tailbone to alleviate pressure on the back. More experienced yoga practitioners have the option of extending their arms above the head and on the floor and/or lifting their heels and hips higher. If you have knee, back, or neck pain, consult a doctor first before performing the Bridge Pose.

Vitamins A to Zinc, courtesy of the Weil Vitamin Advisor

The Benefits Of Vitamin C

Vitamin C is a powerful antioxidant that must be obtained through diet. It is depleted when you are physically, mentally, or emotionally stressed. It is important to increase consumption during times of stress. Good food sources include broccoli, cantaloupe, kiwi, oranges, peppers, pineapple, pink grapefruit and strawberries. Learn more about [vitamin C](#), including how much you should try to get each day.



Seasonal Food: Bananas



Native to the Caribbean and Central America, bananas are one of America's favorite fruits and can bring a touch of summer to your table during colder months. They are rich in [potassium](#) - one banana contains 450 mg of potassium, one-fifth of the adult daily requirement - and offer a fair share of magnesium (33 mg), too. Bananas are also a good source of vitamins B6, B9, and C.

In addition, bananas help to:

- 1 Strengthen the stomach lining** - bananas are good for soothing indigestion.
- 2 Normalize blood pressure** and protect against atherosclerosis and heart disease.
- 3 Promote healthy bones.**

The perfect portable food, a banana contains only about 100 calories, and serves as a healthful snack or pick-me-up anytime during the day.

Enjoy the natural sweetness bananas bring in cereals, muffins and desserts, as well as relishes and salads. They can even be enjoyed overripe in breads and smoothies!

Try bananas in these recipes:

- **[Carrot-Banana Muffins](#)**
- **[Chocolate Banana Tart](#)**
- **[Cocoa-Banana Frozen Dessert](#)**
- **[Banana Bread](#)**