A Special Report
SPRING/SUMMER 2014

Five Ways to Spring Clean Your Diet
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Advice from Hollywood’s Top Trainers

A Special Report from the Physicians Committee

By Susan Levin, M.S., R.D., C.S.S.D.

Background

Each year the nonprofit Physicians Committee surveys the availability of high-fiber vegan menu options at our nation’s busiest venues, including airports, K-12 school districts, and city hospitals. This spring we’re taking a new spin on helping people learn about healthful food choices: We’re pulling in some of Hollywood’s most influential nutrition experts and sharing their favorite tips to help people “spring clean” their diet.

Whether you’re trying to meet the daily RX for fruits and veggies or looking to boost your energy levels for spring, these doctor-approved, Hollywood-tested tips are guaranteed to help you along the way.

Exercise physiologist Marco Borges, nutrition and fitness trainer John Pierre, and former Ironman and performance nutritionist Brendan Brazier weigh in with tips and recipes that will help boost your energy, trim your waistline, and rev up your immune system.

The trending items this spring: plant-based foods that reduce inflammation, strengthen your immune system, and promote a healthy gut flora.

The only warning we give is that these tips and delicious foods may lead you to adopt an entirely plant-based diet, which can transform your health, give you boundless energy, help you fit into your clothes better, and add years to your life. Just remember that the more colorful your meal is, the more nutrients you consume and the healthier you’ll be in the long run.
Five Ways to Spring Clean Your Diet

The Foods

1. **Radishes.** Low-Calorie Snack, Immune Booster, Fight Inflammation
2. **Lemons.** Flush Toxins from Body, Produce Collagen for Healthy Skin
3. **Spinach.** Most Nutrient-Dense Food on Earth
4. **Berries.** Steady Blood Sugar, Boost Brain Health
5. **Pineapple.** Enhances Athletic Recovery, Packed with Vitamin C

1. Radishes

Exercise physiologist Marco Borges enjoys radishes as a healthful midday snack. He notes radishes are nutritional powerhouses full of vitamin C, potassium, and fiber, which helps reduce inflammation. His top tip? Toss radishes into your next salad or enjoy them alone with lemon, salt, and pepper.

**Spring Super Food:** Radishes are a delicious low-calorie snack: One cup has less than 20 calories. Radishes don’t like to brag, but their anti-inflammatory properties help reduce swelling and relieve congestion, alleviating asthma and reducing the risk of sinus infections, upper respiratory tract infections, and bronchitis.

2. Lemons

Borges’ second piece of advice: “Start your day with some water and freshly squeezed lemon for a detox boost first thing in the morning!” He notes that “We all know lemons are loaded with potassium and vitamin C, but they’re also great for digestion, balancing the body’s pH levels, boosting immune function, reducing inflammation, and keeping skin clear and wrinkle free.”

**Energy Boost:** Lemons are rich in bioflavonoids and vitamin C, antioxidants that help fight fatigue and shield your body from the common cold, seasonal flu, and certain forms of cancer. Starting your day with antioxidants will naturally boost energy and your immune system.

3. Spinach

“Popeye was definitely onto something,” Borges hints. “Spinach might have been the first superfood but with the recent rise in popularity of kale, some might have forgotten about our loyal friend!” Borges proclaims that “Spinach contains more nutrients per calorie than any other food on earth.” His top tip is to add spinach to your smoothies for a sweet taste that will impress you and your family.
Five Ways to Spring Clean Your Diet

A popular smoothie at the Borges home is spinach with homemade almond milk, a frozen banana, and a spoon of sunflower butter.

For a sweeter smoothie he recommends adding spinach with two green apples, one lemon, two small pitted dates, one frozen banana, and two leaves of kale.

**RX:** This is an easy way to help you get at least five servings of fruits and vegetables each day. Drink one cup of this smoothie, and you’re halfway there. It works for children, too. Our dietitians use the names “Green Monster,” “Green Glamour,” and “Going Green” interchangeably to appeal to children, teens, and parents. We encourage you to try this at home!

4. **Berries**

“Spring is the perfect time to get out of hibernation mode by energizing your body and resetting your taste buds,” notes fitness and nutrition trainer John Pierre. He explains, “While heavier foods work well in winter, spring invites us to choose foods that promote increased energy and vitality. One great choice is fresh, luscious berries since they reduce inflammation, enhance brain power, and taste delicious.”

**Brain-Booster:** The anthocyanins in blueberries and grapes are making a splash in research labs. Researchers with the University of Cincinnati find this antioxidant may help study participants improve learning and recall. Researchers from Harvard find blueberries lower diabetes risk by 26 percent. As we continue to learn about the connection between diabetes and Alzheimer’s, it’s great to have a food that can reduce the risk of both.

5. **Pineapple**

“As the weather gets better, some of us look to take our workouts outdoors, and we may get a little carried away,” notes Borges. The good news: “Pineapple contains a specific enzyme called bromelain, which is known, amongst other things, to help reduce inflammation. Go ahead and run those extra miles or get that extra workout in. Just add some pineapple to your fruit salad or enjoy it alone to help speed recovery. You’ll be back out in no time!”

**Nutrition Facts:** Pineapples help boost your immune system and may help fight cancer, thanks to vitamin C, which detoxifies harmful substances. One cup contains 100 percent of your RDA for vitamin C.
Five Ways to Spring Clean Your Diet

Synopsis: We know these five foods can’t create miracles on their own, but used as part of a healthful plant-based diet—with adequate rest and an active lifestyle—we’re confident they can give us the extra punch we need to spring into summer.

Over the long run, anti-inflammatory foods work with our immune system to create a healthy gut flora, reducing risk for obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and certain forms of cancer.

We’ve compiled the five superfoods below as recipes to try alone or as a one-day meal plan.

Recipes

Sample Meal Plan

- Early a.m.: Lemon with Water from Marco Borges
- Breakfast: Spinach Smoothie from Marco Borges
- Lunch: Sweet Potato Salad Delight from John Pierre
- Dinner: Nori Hand Rolls from Brendan Brazier
- Dessert: Minted Fruit Kebabs from Neal Barnard, M.D., or Super-Fruit Sangria from Brendan Brazier

Lemon Water
From Marco Borges

1/2 lemon
1 glass of warm water

Squeeze the lemon in the glass of warm water as soon as you wake up. Repeat daily.

Spinach Smoothie
From Marco Borges

1 bunch spinach
1 frozen banana
1 tablespoon almond butter
1 cup almond or rice milk

Blend all the ingredients together for an unbelievably delicious and nutritiously dense smoothie.

This smoothie has 372 calories, 13 grams of fiber, and 15 grams of protein.
Five Ways to Spring Clean Your Diet

Sweet Potato Salad Delight
By John Pierre

2 sweet potatoes (steamed and cubed, leave the skin on for extra fiber)
4-6 cups leafy greens
2 cups asparagus (chopped)
1 red bell pepper (chopped)
1 small zucchini (cubed)
2 cups sprouts (broccoli, alfalfa, etc.)
1 cup oil-free hummus
1 tablespoon fat-free salsa
Toss ingredients in a bowl and enjoy this high-antioxidant salad as a side or main dish.

Nori Hand Rolls
From Brendan Brazier

Ingredients:

- 4 large square sheets nori seaweed
- 1/4 cucumber, julienned
- 1 carrot, julienned
- 1 red pepper, julienned
- 1 avocado, sliced
- 1 1/2 cups of cooked, sprouted medium or short-grain brown rice (soak rice for at least 1 hour in warm water before cooking)
  Note: For ideal sushi texture, jasmine, long grain, or basmati are NOT good substitutes in this dish.
- Handful of fresh basil leaves
- 1/4 cup hempseeds or sesamse seeds
- Water and a basting brush
- Low-sodium tamari or Bragg Liquid Aminos
- Optional wasabi powder or paste
- Pickled ginger

Hand rolls and salad can be prepared in advance and kept in the fridge until ready to serve.
Five Ways to Spring Clean Your Diet

Preparation

1. At the bottom edge of each nori sheet, place filling in this order: rice, basil leaves, cilantro, avocado, cucumber, carrot, red pepper, rice, and a sprinkle of seeds.
2. Roll as tightly as possible (a mat may be used, but hand rolling can be fun!) Tip: brush a little water on the inside of the nori as you roll to help it stick.
3. Cut into 6–8 pieces.
4. Assemble on plates and add a side of salad.
5. Serve with ginger and small dipping bowls of tamari or Bragg Liquid Aminos.

For a spicier version, whisk wasabi powder or paste into tamari or Bragg Liquid Aminos (to taste).

Minted Fruit Kebabs

By Christine Waltermyer, C.H.H.C., and Neal Barnard, M.D.

Makes 4 kebabs (4 servings)

Fresh fruit makes a striking appearance in these antioxidant-rich kebabs. Enjoy them for a refreshing, light dessert!

8 red or green grapes
4 large strawberries
4 1-inch-square cantaloupe chunks
4 1-inch-square honeydew chunks
4 1/2-inch-thick slices peeled kiwi
4 1-inch-square watermelon chunks
1/4 cup orange juice
2 teaspoons fresh lime juice
2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh mint leaves
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
4 10-inch bamboo skewers

Thread 1 grape, 1 strawberry, 1 cantaloupe chunk, 1 honeydew chunk, 1 slice kiwi, 1 watermelon chunk, and 1 more grape onto a skewer. Repeat with the remaining fruit and skewers. Place the finished skewers in a shallow container.

In a small bowl, whisk together the orange juice, lime juice, mint, and vanilla. Pour the marinade over the fruit kebabs, cover, and chill for at least 30 minutes (or up to 3 hours) in the refrigerator before serving.
Five Ways to Spring Clean Your Diet

Super-Fruit Sangria

By Brendan Brazier

Brendan Brazier offers a new drink from *Thrive Energy Cookbook* that he promises everyone will love. This super nutrient-dense drink requires just five minutes of your time and a blender. Berries, pineapple, and lemon are key ingredients—making it a perfect blend of the experts’ advice for spring.

4 or 5 fresh or frozen strawberries
10 fresh or frozen raspberries
1/2 cup fresh or frozen blueberries
1/3 cup chopped pineapple
2 fresh mint leaves
Zest of 1/2 orange
Zest of 1/2 lemon
Zest of 1/2 lime
2 tablespoon freshly squeezed orange juice
2 tablespoon freshly squeezed lime juice
2 tablespoon pomegranate juice
2 tablespoon acai berry juice
6 tablespoon coconut water
2 tablespoon agave nectar or maple syrup
1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract
About 2 cups ice

In a blender, combine all the ingredients except the ice. Add ice to about 1 inch above the liquid line. Blend on high speed until smooth and creamy.

Resources

Visit [PCRM.org](http://PCRM.org) for additional tips, recipes, or to sign up for breaking medical news

Want to try a completely plant-based diet? Visit [21DayKickstart.org](http://21DayKickstart.org) to learn about how celebrity coaches Marco Borges, Brendan Brazier, and Neal Barnard, M.D., eat for a day. There is no cost to join, and users get a free 21-day meal plan, local restaurant guide, and access to an online discussion forum where you can connect with our registered dietitians.