



— Food for Health —

Wellness Newsletter

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The True Cost of Healthy Eating

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You can pay the farmer now
or pay the doctor later.

– Unknown

The Value of Healthy Eating

What price would you pay in exchange for good health? That's a tough question, isn't it? It's tough because good health is priceless! We rarely think about these things when we're healthy, but that all changes the moment we're handed an unfavorable medical report.

Your Body is Resilient

Resiliency is defined as: the capacity to withstand or to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.

The truth is, you're one tough cookie! Your body was built to be resilient, but it doesn't happen by accident; you must feed it right.

If your current food choices and lifestyle habits aren't delivering the results you're looking for, it's time to make a change! Food has immense power to heal the body, so when you start putting the right stuff in, your body will respond with better health.

The Cost of the Standard American Diet

The cost of the Standard American Diet (SAD) is steep, yet ironically, it's these very foods we reach for because we view them as affordable. But are they really? It's no secret that processed foods loaded with fat, sugar, salt and preservatives are much to blame for the declining health of our nation.

Prescription drugs take a heavy toll on the wallet, not to mention the physical burden that often comes with taking them. Sometimes these side effects require you to take another medicine to counterbalance the effects. I'm not suggesting prescription medications don't have their place, but I strongly believe diet and lifestyle changes can minimize the need for them.

The Value of Nutritious Food

"You can pay the farmer now or pay the doctor later" – Unknown

Let's talk about the value of filling your body with wholesome foods from the earth. Consider these seven shifts that occur in the body and mind when you improve the quality of your food choices.

- Your energy level goes way up.
- You feel satisfied with less food (so you really save money!).
- Your mood is lifted.
- Your digestion is improved (which positively affects your mood and energy).
- Your immune system is strengthened, which lessens the severity of colds and flus (and often you can avoid them altogether).

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CAN YOU COOK THE NUTRIENTS OUT OF YOUR FOOD?

To cook or not to cook? That is the question on the minds of those seeking to get the most nutrition out of their food. When it comes to fruits and vegetables, the answer is, it depends.

The Benefits of Eating Raw Fruits and Vegetables

In general, raw fruits and vegetables are more beneficial for your health than their cooked counterparts. Here are three reasons to reach for raw:

- **They have more vitamins.** Once fruits and veggies are cooked, their vitamin and phytonutrient (antioxidant) content can become diminished. Water-soluble vitamins like vitamin C and B-vitamins, and fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E, and K are particularly vulnerable to heat.
- **They are full of enzymes.** Also sensitive to heat are the living digestive enzymes present in raw fruits and vegetables. These special proteins help break down food particles so you can digest and absorb them. While it's true that enzymes are produced naturally by your pancreas, certain lifestyle habits like excessive alcohol intake, lack of physical activity, and eating a Standard American Diet (i.e., SAD diet) full of processed convenience foods, can have a negative impact on enzyme production over time.
- **They make you happy!** Research shows that people who eat more fruits and vegetables have a higher likelihood of happiness, positive mood, and life satisfaction. This is because cooking and processing of fruits and vegetables has the potential to diminish nutrient levels, which likely limits the delivery of nutrients that are essential for optimal emotional functioning.

The simple act of eating a couple servings of raw fruits and vegetables every day is one step you can take to squeeze the most nutrition, absorption, and happiness out of your produce.

Vegetables to Enjoy Cooked

Common sense tells us that plant foods like winter squash, sweet potatoes and dried beans and lentils all need to be cooked before eaten. But those aren't the only veggies that should be cooked. It turns out the antioxidants in vegetables like cabbage, carrots, kale and tomatoes, are more easily absorbed by your body when cooked.

Steaming, sautéing, stir-frying, and roasting (at 200-300 °F) are the best methods of cooking to preserve nutrition. A good rule to follow is low to moderate heat for 5-10 minutes max.

Tips for Peak Nutrition and Absorption of Fruits and Vegetables

- **Add healthy fat.** To increase the bioavailability of fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K, drizzle a little healthy fat like Heinen's extra virgin olive oil or avocado oil over asparagus, bell peppers, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, carrots, leafy greens, mushrooms, onions, squash and sweet potatoes.
- **Soak dried beans, pes, lentils, nuts and seeds in water.** This helps deactivate phytic acid—a natural substance in these foods that bind to minerals and prevents their absorption.
- **Chew, chew, chew!** Be sure to chew your food until liquified. It may take more time, but doing so activates salivary enzymes and digestive juices to help you better digest and absorb your food.
- **Shop local and in season.** Purchasing locally grown produce at Heinen's gives you the extra nutritional edge your body deserves. Local and seasonal fruits and veggies are picked closer to full ripeness, which means more vitamins, minerals and antioxidants for you!
- **Stock up on frozen fruits and vegetables.** Some of the most nutritious fruits and vegetables are found in Heinen's Frozen food department. Because they are harvested at peak ripeness and then quickly flash frozen, the vitamins and minerals are locked in and loaded until you're ready to enjoy them. Just be sure to reach for the plain varieties when possible.

Key Takeaway

You've heard the saying: you are what you eat. I think it's important to take this one step further: you are what you absorb! If what you're eating lacks vitamins and minerals or you aren't fully digesting and absorbing the nutrients in that food, you won't be living up to your ultimate health potential.

Whether in a smoothie, salad, or as an afternoon snack, make it a rule to fit some raw fruits and vegetables into your meals each day. I find it easiest to incorporate raw fruits and veggies at breakfast and lunch, which then leaves plenty of room to enjoy baked sweet potatoes, carrots, or a colorful vegetable stir-fry with dinner.

The Value of Healthy Eating

continued

- Your self-esteem is boosted because feeling good in your body translates to feeling good in your mind.
- You develop a sense of reverence for your body and begin to see it as a gift. Who doesn't want to take care of something they love and respect?

Now, everyone's situation is different, but \$1.00 for an apple or 3 bucks for a bunch of broccoli doesn't seem so bad when the return on investment is a positive shift in your overall health. Even small investments in healthier food make a big difference, so start where you can!

13 Affordable Fx-Approved Foods to Stretch Your Dollar

Healthy food is more affordable than you may think. In fact, the following items at Heinen's come straight from the earth and are some of the most nutritious and cost-friendly foods you can get your hands on.

- **Broccoli sprouts, cilantro and parsley:** Sprinkle a handful on salads or toss into smoothies.
- **Lemons:** Squeeze in water for a flavor boost or blend a few wedges into your favorite smoothie.
- **Ginger:** Add a one-inch piece of fresh ginger to your smoothie or grate over hot vegetable dishes.
- **Beets:** Level up your eating habits by dropping a few fresh raw beet slices into your smoothie or drizzle with Heinen's avocado oil and roast in the oven.
- **Brussels sprouts:** Roast and add to salads or serve as a side dish.
- **Garlic:** Add to homemade salad dressings or marinades.
- **Cabbage:** Make a colorful coleslaw using a mix of green and purple cabbage.
- **Carrots:** Dip in Heinen's hummus for a mid-day snack.
- **Lentils:** Make a big pot of lentil soup.
- **Frozen berries:** Add to yogurt or oatmeal.
- **Apples:** Enjoy as a snack with a tablespoon of Heinen's fresh ground cashew butter.

Key Takeaway

Good health is simply priceless. Increasing the amount of whole, fresh foods in your diet may require you to make small sacrifices elsewhere, but if it means a longer, healthier life, I believe it is well worth it!



Mel's Product Pick

Fresh Energy Medjool Dates

If there was a delicious, sweet, caramel-like candy at Heinen's that offered a natural source of potassium, calcium, magnesium, iron, B-vitamins, antioxidants and fiber, and was gentle on blood sugar, would you buy it? Me too!

Well, guess what? Fresh Energy Medjool dates fit that exact description and you can find them right in Heinen's Produce Department. They are my all-time favorite way to quiet my sweet tooth.

Medjool dates come from the date palm tree and are considered the oldest cultivated fruit, with evidence dating back to around 6,000 B.C. in the Middle East. Today they are grown much closer to home in California.

To enjoy Fresh Energy Medjool dates, simply slice them down the middle, remove the pit and pop them into your mouth! You can also try one of these snack ideas:

- Stuff with one teaspoon of Treeline goat-style cheese (in the Specialty Cheese Department) or Heinen's fresh ground nut butter (in the Produce Department).
- Drop one into your favorite smoothie and blend. One date is all it takes to sweeten it up!
- Dice and add to oatmeal, salads, or grain-based side dishes.
- Stuff with an almond. It fits perfectly, just like a glove!
- Whip up a batch of Mini Healthy Candy Bars! It's like a good-for-you Snicker's bar! (recipe on the last page)

Fresh Energy Medjool dates will stay fresh for one month if stored in the provided package, but if you'd like to extend their shelf life, store them in an airtight container in your refrigerator for up to four months.

I just know Mother Nature dreamed up dates for the sole purpose of helping us healthfully calm our sweet tooth. Give them a try today!



MINI HEALTHY CANDY BARS

*The following recipe was created by
Heinen's Chief Dietitian, Melanie Jatsek, RD,LD.*

These mini candy bars are just too good to resist! And because they're made with Fx™-approved ingredients, you don't have to. Don't be intimidated by dates! The chewy flesh of this premium fruit is moist and plump with a rich, sweet flavor that can be likened to caramel.

Prep time: 15 minutes; Servings: 12

Ingredients

- 12 Fresh Energy Medjool dates
- 1/3 cup Heinen's fresh ground peanut butter or almond butter
- 1/4 cup Heinen's unsalted peanuts or raw almonds, chopped
- 1/2 cup Equal Exchange bittersweet chocolate chips
- 1 tsp. Heinen's coconut oil
- Pinch of Maldon sea salt flakes (optional)

Instructions

1. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Cut a slit in the center of each date and remove the pit.
3. Stuff the inside of each date with peanut or almond butter and sprinkle with the chopped peanuts or almonds. Place on the baking sheet.
4. Combine the chocolate chips and coconut oil in a small saucepan and heat on low. Stir occasionally until melted. Alternately, you can add the ingredients to a small bowl and melt in the microwave for 30 second increments until smooth and combined.
5. Drizzle the chocolate over the dates to coat. Sprinkle with flaky sea salt (optional).
6. Refrigerate stuffed dates until the chocolate has fully hardened, about 30 minutes.

These mini "candy bars" will keep in the refrigerator for up to two weeks... but I doubt they'll last that long!

*Recipe photography was provided by
Christina Musgrave from Tasting with Tina.*



Club Fx is a FREE program for Heinen's Tasteful Rewards members that offers education, nutrition tips, product recommendations and recipe inspiration for customers to live their healthiest lives. Interested in becoming a Club Fx member? Update your Tasteful Rewards account to ensure you get our weekly emails and access to personalized nutrition services!