

## What is a "Super Food?"

The term "Super Food" is one that you may have probably heard of but what does it mean? The term, not frequently used by Dieticians or Nutrition Scientists, is used frequently in a wide variety of contexts. Many marketers use it to make their product "stand out" to consumers who are becoming more and more educated on making the right choices when roaming the aisles of their local grocery store.

The most common use of the term is to describe foods with high nutrient content and very few properties considered to be negative, such as being high in saturated fats or artificial ingredients, food additives or contaminants. An often cited example of a super fruit is the blueberry, which is low in calories and is rich in various nutrients such as manganese, vitamin C and fiber. Other examples of super foods include broccoli, spinach, pumpkin and tomatoes, which are also rich in various nutrients. All contain a variety of nutrients in varying amounts as do common plant foods like bananas, pineapples and potatoes, which have only rarely been referred to as "super foods". Even fish may be considered a super food due to its content of omega-3 fatty acids but it also rarely makes a "super foods list".

## Factors to Consider

Humans have many options available to them when it comes to fueling their bodies but we must consider the "better" options when making our decisions. Let's use a simple example of the "Big Mac", which contains 3g of fiber and 550 calories where as an apple has about the same amount of fiber and less than 100 calories. One could argue that they are getting the fiber they need but we must consider the amount of calories we ingest in order to get those nutrients.

## Nutrient Density

Looking at how much nutrition you are getting from a particular food when selecting, makes good sense. Analyzing the macro nutrients (carbohydrates, proteins and fats) as well as the micro nutrients (vitamins and minerals) can help you with your decision. Another simple example is when packing a snack; think about how many granola bars it would take for you to get the same nutrients you would get from a piece of coconut or berries.

## Calorie Density

Think about the number of calories the food has. Keep in mind that most "junk food" is higher in calories and fats, which you can get less from what one, would call a "super food".

## Fiber

We hear a lot about fiber and marketers like to highlight this term in many products where you will see "high in fiber" or a version of that message. Fiber is necessary for proper function of our GI tract and it not only assists in the digestion process but it also helps us expel the foods we ingest. Fiber is actually removed in the processing of many foods. As an example we could look at 100% pure fruit juice, which one could say is good for you because it's 100% juice from the fruit however if you look at the nutrient breakdown, you will see that the fiber that exists in the natural form of the fruit is no longer in the packaged version.

"Super Food"	"Junk Food"
Highly nutritious	Low nutrition
High fiber	Low fiber
Low calorie	High calorie
Low glycemic index	High glycemic index
Natural	Highly processed

## Glycemic Index

The glycemic index of a food refers to how quickly the food turns into sugar after you eat it. Sugar is a source of energy but flooding your body to quickly is not helpful. The body will store sugar that isn't used up as fat. A food with a lower glycemic index, releases sugar into the body at a slower, steadier rate which may assist in making you "feel less hungry" or satisfied longer.

## Natural or Manmade

The final factor to consider is whether the food comes from the ground, tree or bush or is it manmade. Natural foods have much more health and nutrition packed into them than any manufactured version.

Keep in mind that "junk foods" contribute to weight gain, immune deficiencies and make you feel hungrier. Natural foods help keep you healthy and allow you to function the way our bodies were meant to.

February 2013

## Fun Food Facts!



The modern day orange carrot wasn't cultivated until Dutch growers in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century took mutant strains of the purple carrot including yellow and white and gradually developed them into the sweet, plump, orange version we have today

## Did You Know?



\*\*\*

Two 12-ounce servings of freshly juiced apples, pears, carrots, celery and leafy greens can produce the same effect as twice the dosing recommendation of a laxative.

\*\*\*

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER  
ONLINE  
[WWW.RAINBOWLUNCHES.COM](http://WWW.RAINBOWLUNCHES.COM)